

RETHINKING COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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International Students' Conference on Communication
(ISCC)
-Ninth Edition-

19th of May, 2021
Cluj-Napoca, Romania

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EDITORS:
Ioana IANCU
Lorina CULIC
Anișoara PAVELEA

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Presa Universitară Clujeană
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Foreword

Being already a tradition, the *International Student's Conference on Communication*, organized by the Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising, Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, is celebrating its ninth edition (19 May 2021). The conference is developed in collaboration with the *Communication and Social Innovation Research Center (CORE)*. Each year, the conference offers the bachelor, master and doctoral students the opportunity to share their research interests and their fascinating empirical results, to exchange ideas and feedback on their work, and to develop critical skills of analysis and presentation.

Considering the pandemic context, the topic of the conference is *Rethinking Communication and Interaction. Challenges and Opportunities in Times of Crisis*. The present volume is a book of extended abstracts, enjoying the participation of 46 topics. The volume has six major chapters, out of which one is dedicated to the doctoral students.

The first chapter focuses on Branding and Strategic Communication. Thus, the papers presented are related to public and private institutions' strategic communication in the pandemic context, to strategies meant to reduce the failure when planning an event, to the effect of artificial intelligence on creativity, to smart cities and sustainable life, to online communication strategies in museums, to personal branding of Elon Musk, and to 5Gang influence on youngsters' purchase decision.

The second chapter is dedicated to the German line students and it is entitled Communication on Online Platforms. The papers are underlying issues as strategies used in Covid-19 vaccination campaign, Facebook's posts of Bucharest's leading candidates in 2020 local elections, means of expression on the Romanian cultural identity in ads, intercultural communication in advertising, employer branding on online platforms, perception of the internet users on privacy issues, or influencers that became mothers.

The third chapter concentrates on Advertising and Consumer Behavior. The topic approached by the students are related to animated commercials and their persuasion potential, to the presence of children in emotionally effective advertising, to minimalism efficiency in print ads, to the impact of guerrilla marketing on the consumer, to the effect of YouTube ads on youngsters, to the role of preference on decision making process, and to the influence of autonomous sensory meridian response on emotions and behavior.

The fourth chapter emphasizes the Impact of Media Communication, by approaching topics on the role of spiral of silence theory on expressing opinions on Facebook, on stimulus-response theory during elections, on the social media influencers, on YouTube's role in the independence of young people, on the impact of pandemic on the body image, on the evolution of female characters in post-revolution Romanian cinema, and on the streaming platforms as an antidote for piracy.

The fifth chapter is dedicated to Communication, Behavior and Psychology. The papers within this chapter are approaching topics as collective online behavior during Covid pandemic, the effects of reading for pleasure, the link between pandemic anxiety and conspiracy theories and religion, the effect of using the code of good manners in an email, the students' impediments of professional ascension, the influence of pets on emotional intelligence, the map of anxiety within students' groups, and the effect of multiple source digital information on social perception.

The last chapter is dedicated to doctoral students and their perspectives on nowadays communication issues. Their papers are related to central bank's communication strategy in

pandemic, to the role of visual stimuli on the music perception, to the art of storytelling, to personal branding in online context, to influencer marketing on cross-platform perspective, to the role of authenticity for brands and social media influencers, to vaccination news sharing and health information seeking behavior, to gender perspective on Virtual Reality, and to strategic communication is sport.

The authors of the current volume assume their compliance with the academic norms and declare their work to be original. Like every year, as coordinators of the volume and of the *International Students' Conference on Communication*, we encourage the enthusiasm of students and their development of good research skills. We hope that this effort will reward them on the long run in their professional experience. Thus, we would like to deeply thank all the authors for their valuable contributions.

The Editors

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Chapter 1: BRANDING & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Population's Attitude Concerning Public and Private Institutions' Strategic Communication in Covid-19 Pandemic

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Stability might be one of the most essential elements in a developed society. But what happens when functional balance is changed by unpredictable events? COVID-19 pandemic is such an event. It started in 2019 and it still affects people's lifestyle everywhere around the world. Authorities were in duty to communicate true, coherent and detailed pandemic evolution information such as new cases, deaths, incidence rates etc. For a safe shopping experience, supermarkets also implemented new communication strategies to preserve the classic feeling of shopping. All these changes showed how important is to study and understand communication for a proper functioning society. Thus, public and private institutions changed their approach – they began informing people about the pandemic evolution through social media.

Our research is of high interest because its main objective is discovering audience attitudes towards campaigns released by public and private Romanian institutions. Beginning with research studies on this subject, we focus on a new global phenomenon and the changes it produces in what concerns people's attitudes. We also proposed a better understanding of how people perceive communication strategies used by institutions. Moreover, we aimed to discover if their approach of getting closer to people generates attitudinal changes of population.

To get the whole picture of the subject we used three research methods to obtain qualitative and quantitative results. The first method we used was content analysis based on a complex analysis grid that helped us correlate Facebook posts with public attitudes. The second method we used was the social investigation in which we applied an online survey. The last method we used is the content analysis based on an interview grid.

For the first method two analysis grids were used. One of them was applied on Facebook posts made by private institutions and the other one on public institutions Facebook posts. We analyzed pandemic posts made between March 2020 and February 2021. The private institutions we studied were three popular supermarkets, for each of them analyzing 40 posts. On the other side, the public institutions we chose were Health Ministry (27 posts) and Ministry of Internal Affairs (12 posts). For the second method we used a five-section survey which was applied to 50 subjects, of which 30 were women and 20 men. 34 subjects were between 18-25 and 16 subjects between 25-35 years old. Moving on to the last research method we took interviews of 10 respondents (5 females and 5 males) between 16-25 years, as 26-35 years old group refused to answer our questions.

We aimed to answer three research question through our research paper:

Q1. What is the public attitude towards messages included in communication campaigns made by public and private institutions?

- Q2. What is the public perception about COVID -19 approaches of public and private institutions?
- Q3. Which one of the communication campaigns was more efficient in informing the audience?

Based on these elements we also developed two hypotheses for our study:

H1. If public and private institutions use communication campaigns adapted to the pandemic situation, people anxiety will be lower.

H2. If public and private institutions use communication campaigns adapted to the pandemic situation, audience trust in these institutions will increase.

After analysing the data, we have discovered that online users tend to express their negative feelings or attitudes through comments or facebook reacts. These attitudes are probably deeply embedded in people's opinion and trust in Romania's institutions, a fact that should be considered by future research. People are not convinced by the norms and regulations that the authorities have put into place. Moreover, necessary resources (such as masks or sanitizers) have been criticized by people who consider that the pandemic is just a pretext for manufacturers to get rich. The uncertainty and the lack of trust are the main feelings that could be observed by following the virtual interaction between the people and certain social media official accounts.

After taking a look at the surveys, there were no indicators to point that there is a correlation between the social media posts and the anxiety level felt by the population. However, the second hypothesis was confirmed. The social media campaigns run by these certain institutions did not raise the population's trust levels. On the contrary, users who came in contact with posts regarding the pandemic were registering higher levels of uncertainty.

There are lots of developments this study would benefit from in case of future instalments. First of all, a longer-term analysis that centers on the way some of the online taglines are built represents an important aspect of the research, especially for those interested in the advertising/PR industry. Another interesting suggestion would be breaking the targeted audience into specific age groups, in order to better understand certain how age differences determine different opinions.

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A Good Strategy: The Element That Reduces the Failure When Planning an Event

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Introduction

The beauty of the events industry comes from its complexity, being built on rigorous planning, faithful collaborative relationships, efficient teamwork, insights, self-control, attention to details and passion (Goldblatt, 2012). Thus, the whole planning process comes divided in several phases, each of them containing some more sub-phases; and at its basics, there lays the strategy, meant to establish all the predictable and unpredictable aspects that an event implies, to guide everything that follows (Kerzner, 2002). In order to determine the extent and manner to which it influences the implementation and success of an event, the research makes a detailed analysis of the strategy's component elements.

For objective reasons, each complex project is exposed to a high risk of failure (Williams, 2017), fact that is also valid in the events industry; from this perspective an event is "a high-wire act without a safety net" (Allen, 2009). By connecting the two concepts, the research also tries to emphasize the relationship between strategy and the event's risk of failure - to determine if the strategy represents the element that reduces the risk of failure when planning an event, if the more rigorous the strategy is built, the lower the risk of failure of the event.

The following pages make a brief pass through the main concepts of the event planning process, focusing especially on Design and Planning. They follow the meaning of "the risk" for the industry, but also the essential aspects that influence it. Not least, they research several tools that can improve the strategy-building process. Further, in order to reach authentic information, they gather and present valuable information from event specialists, resulting in a more practical approach on the topic.

This research paper serves as a guideline for the professionals in the field, completing the literature already developed; it addresses the topic through a comparison made between the general, theoretical framework and the processes created and used in practice, building a complex perspective upon the issues. Furthermore, different from other research papers, it brings together the two concepts - strategy and risk - that have been little analyzed together before, in order to emphasize their causal relationship.

Methodology

This study aims to answer the following research questions: 1. How does the strategy influence the coordination phase of an event? and 2. What is the relationship between the event strategy and its risk of failure? Therefore, the research is conducted through a semi-structured interview that has an interview guide composed of 11 open-questions. The interviewees are first asked about their perspective on the "event failure" concept, but also about its main causes. Afterwards, the questions approach the stages of organizing an event, focusing on the strategy - how important it is how it is built, and what is the relationship between the events' risk of failure and the strategy. Further, the topic moves upon the connection between the events' risk of failure and its budget. The interview ends with questions related to precautions and tools used for planning.

The target group is formed by five event planners - four women and one man - all living in Cluj-Napoca. Their ages vary between 24-50 years old. They conduct different types of events (concerts, conferences and courses, fairs, festivals, and public manifestations), working both in the

private and public sectors, both local and national. Each one of them is specialized in only one niche of the field.

Results

The interviewees define the “event failure” concept through the target, whether referring to a lower number of participants, the participation of untargeted people or dissatisfied participants from various reasons. Withal, answers also refer to the extent to which the goals and objectives have been achieved.

Some of the main reasons why events fail, according to our interviewees, are bad planning, a wrong divided budget or a poor marketing campaign. However, there are some other aspects they are emphasizing. One of them refers to the organizing team, highlighting reasons like *“tensions between the team members, a lack of reaction when it comes to problems, their attitude towards the participants or an inappropriate reaction when it comes to unpredictable situations”* (F, 36). Another opinion refers to the implementation stage, which is dependent on external human resources. A third noted answer marks the aspect of competitive events.

When it comes to influencing the event risk of failure, two stages are mentioned as being those that have a major impact: Planning and Promotion, but the balance is tilted towards Planning (*“...lacking a well-planned plan from the beginning, any subsequent step is compromised”* (F, 24).). As for the relationship between Planning and failure, it is emphasized that *“The failure of the event derives from the construction of the strategy. An event is built with a clear objective and addressed to a certain type of audience. The strategy must be thought about these two major components.”* (F, 24).

Every event planner has its own working system and a team adapted to it. As some of them are starting their strategy from the context analysis, some others begin their strategy from the purpose of the event and its target group. One next important aspect is the budget - one of the main factors that influence events’ triumph or failure (*“There is no event without a budget!”* (F, 27). The target group says that an event is, first of all, an investment. Therefore, financial planning must be rigorously constructed, as the event’s potential must be objectively appreciated.

When it comes to precautions (generally speaking), the target group refers mostly to details, but also to periodic evaluation. By paying attention to details, the planner will not only be able to avoid many unpredictable situations but will also be aware of other unstable aspects and gradually develop a backup strategy. The periodic evaluation allows the planner to adapt the strategy to the real course of the planning process. On another hand, they consider it may be “healthy” to develop a pessimist budget and some negative scenarios, in order to develop, in fact, back-up strategies.

Of the most common unforeseen situations, the interviewees mention: weather, change of plans in competitive events, unpredictable situations due to logistical reasons, delays coming from providers or guests (speakers, artists, etc.) and modification of the information communicated due to external causes to the organizer. In this context, the interviewed event planners also mention some practical precautions they always take care of: a reserve fund and a team trained to react especially in unforeseen situations, seeking providers that can adapt to the organizing team and its working system and developing a complex communication management with each entity that is part of a specific activity.

The target group refers to various tools when they are asked to name some aids they use in building the event strategy - SWOT analysis, PEST analysis, Gantt diagram, Fishbone diagram, but also promoting and optimization tools. Also, some of them refer to the experience they have gained through the past years of working in the field, but also to the collaborative relationships.

Conclusion

Failure in the events industry is usually determined by the public, whether it is caused by a low number of participants or their dissatisfaction after the event experience; this is highly influenced both by Planning and Promoting the event.

Every event planner develops a personalized working system and builds a team made up of people who fit. Even though they use several tools to structure the event organization, they do not use a general model, or a complex system developed especially to help them manage Planning and Coordinating stages. The ambiguity of their answers may conclude to the idea that they are, somehow, intuitively planning their events using know-how and tools borrowed from other fields.

When building the event strategy, they pay attention to goals and objectives, its target group/s, details, and budget. Moreover, they take into consideration some essential aspects that serve exclusively in avoiding event failure: training a team to wisely react in crisis situations and paying attention to predictable risk factors.

Another aspect that lies at the basics of the event planning process and represents, at the same time, one of the biggest risks of failure is the budget. The professional event planners consider that there is no event without a budget, as they offer specific attention to its development. A well-built budget plan can ensure the success of the event, as a superficial one can ruin everything. More, event planners tend to develop many budget scenarios, so nothing takes them by surprise. This strategy also applies to the Planning itself, and so they evolve the back-up plans/lists.

The back-up plans/lists refer to two different types of situations: predictable and unpredictable. Thus, the specialists in the field usually build, on one hand, a list with backup solutions for artists, speakers, providers, etc. and, on the other hand, try to predict other situations establishing various scenarios for the unpredictable. Sometimes, in this industry, it is an advantage to be pessimistic - to be able to develop the most pessimistic situations.

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An Experimental Analysis of the Artificial Intelligence Effect towards Creativity

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The purpose of this study is to understand in what manner individual's creativity is influenced by artificial intelligence. Therefore, the paper will consist into a theoretical clash and an experimental analysis on virtual assistance with artificial intelligence. In this way, the research intentions are to identify the individual's attitudes towards artificial assistants, to review the relevant literature in order to acquire the state-of-the-art of the subject and of the artificial intelligence impact on creative tasks and to create a valid measure instrument applicable for testing the causality of the variables.

The constant technological progress affects individual's life and creates new research contexts. As new industries appeared, people became determinate to develop creative abilities applicable in these domains (Zoppelletto, Orlandi, Rossignoli, 2020, 561). The topic of the current research is the impact of artificial intelligence on individual's level of creativity. The aim of this topic is to observe the modalities through which technology is accepted and to have a better understanding of the way artificial intelligence impacts creativity.

During the last years, technology and artificial intelligence evolved rapidly and artificial human are more and more common in individuals social and professional life (Lu et al., 2017, 368). The appearance of new technologies caused socio-psychological changes in human behavior (Fibrianto, Yuniar, 2018, 210). Hence, this phenomenon requires further scientific investigations.

There is a high relationship between credibility and technology (Jackson et al., 2012; Hoffmann, Ivcevic, Brackett, 2016; Dwett, 2003, 370). Thus, one of the study purposes consists into a theoretical clash in order to have a better understanding of the topic. The relevance of this research consists in the novelty of the thematic. It represents a subject with few studies developed from which many of them have incomplete or unconcluded results (Idris & Nor, 2010, 1964; Černočová & Selcuk, 2019, 2).

At a scientific level the paper is relevant for completing the literature gap with experimental results. Furthermore, in Romanian context similar researches are inexistent. For institutional and organizational space, the relevance is given by the opportunity to improve employees' task performance in order to find creative solutions. For the educational process, the study is an element of interest as it can improve teaching strategies and create more creative and attractive study setting.

The thematic have interdisciplinary characteristics, starting from technological investigations, and means of communication development, pedagogical usefulness, sociological and phycological analysis through reviewing concepts like creativity, authority and digital persuasion.

Creativity

Creativity is the subject of many research analyses. In the literature, the topic is present in a vast area of activities. The previous studies presented a continuous interest regarding the manner through which individual's capacities and behavior are influenced by technology (Fibrianto, Yuniar, 2018, 210). Frequently, these studies are inconsistent. Therefore, it is remarked a difficulty in fully understanding the concept (Černočová & Selcuk, 2019, 7). The scientific literature established the basis of the present study. The antecedent research articles represent the foundation for the proposed hypothesis and the research direction.

Artificial intelligence

Even if there are many articles that examine technology impact on creativity, so far, few articles analyzed the relationship between artificial intelligence and creativity. Previous studies recommend merging artificial intelligence with human interaction while doing task requirements in order to acquire the best creative outcomes (Pence, 2019, 7). In literature is remarked that individuals have a negative evaluation towards artificial intelligence implying that most of them perceive the phenomenon as a threat (Cha et al., 2020, 80). It is indicated that individuals react emotionally while interacting with artificial intelligence, comparing human-robot capacities and evaluating some attributes as being superior to robots (Cha et. al, 2020, 89). They invoke the fact that creative potential is social and is an exclusive human trait (Cha et al., 2020, 89).

Authority and digital persuasion

The previous researches mention people's behavioural attitudes towards robots. In this way a characteristic of individuals is attributing them social features. Thus, typically, individuals treat robots like human and can be seen as authority figures as well (Agrawal, Williams, 2017, 57). Yet, some studies suggest that by comparison individuals feel more obligated to follow instructions when given by other human, rather than a robot (Agrawal, Williams, 2017, 57). Moreover, people assume that a robot is not much an independent figure but that is controlled by a human (Åasnes, Cupková, Klein, 2016, 7).

Methodology

The research consists into a sociological experiment. The method serves for identifying detailed insights about the target behaviour in different scenarios. The hypothesis represents a prior statement from which the analysis emerges:

H1: If individuals receive work tasks from virtual assistants then their creativity level increase compared to receiving tasks from other individuals.

H2: If virtual assistants are in a superior position to individuals, then their level of authority decreases and disobedience in individuals increases compared to receiving tasks from other individuals.

Sample

The research aims to observe the effects of artificial intelligence among young individuals. The target for this research will be young Romanian students with ages between 18 and 25 years, passionate about new technologies. The target will be homogeneous with both female and male respondents. The rationality for choosing this sample is due to the youth interest in artificial intelligence and the work context.

Variables

The dependent variables investigate in this analysis are creativity, technology acceptance and digital authority. The independent variable is the experimental condition: if the subjects receive tasks from virtual assistance or if they receive tasks from other individual. The present variables are pre-operationalised in literature in order to be measured.

Procedure

The experiment is divided into two groups according to experimental condition. In the first group, is induced a scenario in which a virtual assistant suggests a task to the subjects. In the second group, this task is given by another individual. Thus, there will be possible to observe if the efficacy on work task is related to the entity that gives the task and if there are any noticeable differences between those two groups in terms of task results.

The subjects will be exposed to a virtual assistant picture. In one group the picture will be shown the original virtual assistant picture with some technological symbols in it. The other picture will be manipulated in order to show the virtual assistant without any of symbols looking human-

like. The visual support is completed by a text in which is presented the task. The subject selection criteria will be randomized. The target that the research focuses on is formed by Romanian students.

Results

The answers were evaluated using a creative writing grille of analysis composed by several text characteristics: image, characterisation, voice and story (Mozaffari, 2013, 2217). In this way, 30 answers were collected for the experimental group and 32 for the control one. The results outcomes suggested that the groups perceived the creative task differently when being asked by a virtual assistant and when being asked by an individual.

Conclusion

There were several elements present in this paper that suggest the artificial intelligence is linked with creativity and have a major impact on improving it. There were found many differences between the group's level of interest in engaging into the task. In terms of digital authority, individuals seemed reluctant to a virtual assistant requirement, and more likely to agree with a task suggested by other individual, even if the creativity level was higher on the group where they knew a virtual assistant is asking them to complete the task.

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Smart City: From a City Branding to a New Healthy and Sustainable Way of Lifestyle

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My research "Smart city: from a city branding to a new healthy and sustainable way of lifestyle" is based on the study of development proposals and the evolution of the city of Cluj-Napoca in European parameters. Romania in 2021 is the result of countless social and political efforts at national and international level. Despite the political situation in Romania and certain unfounded prejudices, we can say that many organizations and NGOs are fighting secular struggles with the system for a possible "alignment" with the rules imposed by the European Union. After debating the economic issue at the macro level, a broader discussion is needed on the level of development and economic status of cities with a western opening (Cluj-Napoca).

Although the beginning was a difficult one, with the implementation of development policies in European parameters with small steps, the city in the heart of Transylvania is currently enjoying the design and implementation of 18 projects supported by the EU. The chosen policy is of a progressive nature, which aims to transform the city of Cluj-Napoca into a "smart" city, where both investors and citizens apply the "win-win" system, contributing to continuous development. The main theme of this paper is the development of the city in EU parameters, deepening public interest policies at the expense of development through projects, which are part of a well-implemented structure at EU level laying the foundations of "tomorrow's normality" where each individual works to reach the common denominator. The communion between public policies, the target audience and investors can only take shape if the three elements work together. This paper aims to fill the research gap by building a comprehensive framework to see the movement of smart cities as an innovation composed of technology, management and policy. Smart cities are an infrastructure challenge for municipalities but also for the government. This study is based on the analysis of the evolution in terms of lifestyle with the help of smart devices that have appeared recently. The emphasis is on how city branding is supported by the evolution of the technology. In conclusion, through this paper work, I want to analyze how, from a smart city (with a huge popularization, which becomes a city brand), might change the whole way of living.

Methodology

As instrument in this study is based only on questionnaire and materials used from work papers made by known researches which are looking to improve a sustainable life in smart cities. Beside this, I used my own experience for this research. To sum up, I was looking for information which have been explored before compared to Cluj-Napoca. I wanted to compare the life style by applying a questionnaire to the citizens from Cluj to see if their life had improved since all this technology becomes part of the daily. The questionnaire application is work-in-progress.

Conclusion

In any policy there are both advantages and disadvantages. Fortunately, the benefits of this "green" policy are far greater than the downsides, but those should not be overlooked either. Although the "smart" life saves precious time for the individual, it comes with a static life. Sedentary lifestyle and functional illiteracy are the problems of the 21st century because technology, implicitly the "smart" life, completely kidnaps the activities carried out before digitalization. For example, large companies develop CSR programs both for company interns and for communities adjacent to large corporations. In addition to those mentioned above, other

problems of this century are the lack of mobility, everything being more convenient to solve from the comfort of your own home, the lack of socialization manifesting itself more online and last but not least, the reduction of certain work places, the activities that were once carried out by certain employees, have now come to be carried out with the help of certain software.

From my point of view, European policies aimed at smart city development are beneficial for rapid and harmonious development in the context of digitalisation in the 21st century. The city of Cluj-Napoca, with a western opening has many advantages, it has many investors and has one of the largest universities nationally and internationally, is prone to continuous changes in innovation and improvement of services. Following the study, I managed to answer the research questions from which I started, concluding that a city that strives for a smart one brings extraordinarily many benefits both economically, socially, culturally and, of course, politically. Branding is the basis of all development. Thus, a well-constructed image manages to attract and "sell" the raw product with greater ease of a continuous publicity due to the vast fields that it covered by the activities carried out.

Through this method, Cluj's branding has spread rapidly through fields such as music, IT, multinationals, NGOs, etc. The city's promotion strategies are based on projects the welfare and development of the community are paramount expansion, Cluj excelling on its way to a smart city.

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The Online Communication Strategies of the Hermitage State Museum and the Van Gogh Museum.

A Comparative Analysis

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The emergence of the online environment has various repercussions concerning the way in which an entity conceives its communication strategy. It has been a new space for affirmation both commercial brands, for which the online environment is another dimension through which they can reach the consumer, and for cultural institutions, which see the web as a new means through which they can promote values. Museums, in turn, have entered the online environment with the intention of asserting their role as a cultural mediator. The way in which they manifest themselves in the online dimension is conditioned by the public they want to address to.

Along with the desire to communicate in the most efficient way, there is also the need to adjust the online platform chosen by a museum and the style it addresses to the target audience of the institution. The importance of studying the online communication strategies of museums comes, first of all, from the desire to identify those good practices of well-known institutions, which can be turned into recommendations for other cultural establishments. This is one of the main reasons that animated this study.

The current paper aims to focus on how two museums whose reputation is difficult to dispute, communicate in the online environment, corresponding to the target audience: the Van Gogh Museum in the Netherlands and the Hermitage State Museum in the Russian Federation. The research aims to establish the type of online platforms used by the two institutions and provide a clearer view of how they manifest themselves on social media, by reporting to their target audience.

The study started from the following research questions:

- What is the profile of the target audience of the Van Gogh Museum and the Hermitage State Museum?
- What are the online communication channels used by the Hermitage State Museum and the Van Gogh Museum?
- What are the similarities and differences between the ways the two institutions communicate on social platforms?
- What is the impact (measured by the number of appreciations, comments, distributions) generated by the content posted by the two museums on social media? Which of them generates a greater impact?

Based on these, we mention that the hypothesis, which will be confirmed or refuted at the end of the paper, is: The Hermitage State Museum and the Van Gogh Museum adjust their communication techniques so that they correspond to the specific target audience of the two institutions.

In order to answer the mentioned research questions, the content analysis was chosen as a method of data collection, in which 60 Facebook posts of the two institutions were analysed. This allowed us to collect the data needed to answer some of the research questions and to provide relevant data to establish the validity of the hypothesis.

The results of the study showed that the Van Gogh Museum and the Hermitage State Museum have a relatively similar target audience, the main segment of which is for both young people and foremost citizens of the countries where the museum is located, and in the second position people from abroad. Both museums also address to the elderly. One difference is that the Hermitage State Museum is positioned as a conservative institution, respectively it addresses to a

suitable audience, while the Van Gogh Museum tries to have a more modern approach, being open to new topics and online trends.

The two institutions have chosen their online communication channels in a way that suits their target audience. The Hermitage State Museum, considering the profile of its own institution and its target audience, resorted to more traditional media channels, such as the radio, but transposed into the online environment. It was found that both institutions have an accessible site, an online store, and are present on social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. One fact that shows us that the Russian museum is attentive to the media consumption of its public is the fact that it has chosen to be present on the most frequently accessed social media platforms in Russia, such as Vkontakte, Odnoklassniki and Telegram. At the same time, the Van Gogh Museum has created a newsletter that is sent by e-mail, and the information in it appears according to the topics that the user selects as of interest to him. They show us that both museums tend to have an online communication strategy adapted to their target audience.

The results of the content analysis showed us, however, that a very important element to achieve a greater impact through online presence is the adaptation of the content posted to the used social media platform. There are several differences between the communication of the official pages of the two museums, in terms of frequency of posts (1.2 posts per day - Van Gogh Museum, 6 posts per day - Hermitage Museum), the language used (English for Van Gogh Museum and Russian for the Hermitage Museum), tonality (rather informal in the case of the museum in the Netherlands and academic for the museum posts in Russia). At the same time, both institutions use social media to fulfil their role of cultural mediator, spreading knowledge about the heritage that they keep. Also, it was established that the posts of the Amsterdam museum page have a greater impact (measured by the number of appreciations, comments, distributions), the number of people reacting to the content posted by it being in the thousands, while for the Hermitage State Museum this number is in hundreds. We can assume that a potential explanation for this may be the decision of the St. Petersburg institution to post content only in Russian, which is not a well-known language for the museum's target audience on Facebook (given that Facebook is a network less used in Russia).

It was found that the Van Gogh Museum and the Hermitage State Museum have chosen a number of online communication channels that match the profile of their target audience, but at the same time, the museum in the Russian Federation does not fully adjust its target audience's social media. By choosing to communicate exclusively in Russian, it limits access to information posted for people in their target audience who do not know the language. Given that more than half of the museum's visitors are not Russian citizens, that Facebook is not a social network used by most Russian users, and that the museum is present on other social media platforms that are better known to the Russian population, the institution's decision to communicate exclusively in Russian on Facebook remains unclear.

The results presented above allow to partially validating the hypothesis of the study. On the one hand, the Hermitage State Museum and the Van Gogh Museum adjust their communication techniques so that they correspond to the specific target audience of the two institutions, but at the same time, it is necessary to improve the approach of the Hermitage State Museum on social platforms like Facebook. It is imperative to emphasize that the conduct of this study involved the existence of several sources of error. The existence of errors both in the creation of the analysis grid and in the way of assigning the characteristics in the content analysis cannot be excluded. Also, we cannot eliminate, at this level, the probability that by increasing the number of analysed posts, the results could change substantially.

At the end of the study, we mention that the usefulness of the results obtained comes mainly from the fact that they can serve as a starting point for more complex studies in this field. Future research, which would address the same topic, could also use other research methods that would provide a wider range of information and details, such as an interview with the institution's communication specialists, which would provide clearer data about the target audience and their communication strategy. The subject of this research deserves the attention of the scientific

community especially because of the importance that the online environment can have for the cultural field in general and museums in particular.

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The Paradigm of Productivity - The Influence of Elon Musk Personal Brand

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This study aims to provide a more comprehensive overview of how individuals perceive the concept of productivity, what kind of impact has the successful personal brand and story of Elon Musk on them and the influence of media on both of these, namely on productivity and on personal branding.

Productivity is quite a frequently used term among the modern spoken language, even though individuals cannot always fully grasp the meaning of this concept. Considering the fact that people nowadays tend to use more and more the phrase „be productive”, for instance, through overloading their schedules with as many activities as possible, there is a surprisingly low average of people questioning themselves about the meaning of productivity. The concept was largely adopted in the economic field, the first writings including it were part of the „Journal de l’Agriculture” by Quesnay (1766) (Tangen, 2005, 35), and since then, productivity came to be spread all over social media platforms, especially on Youtube. The most used definition of productivity is the ratio between input and output, which can be explained in the following way: for maximal productivity, people should invest a minimal input, and obtain a maximum output (Palvalin, van der Voordt, Jylhä, 2017, 3). Moreover, productivity applies for a single action only, which then individually distinguishes itself from performance, efficacy, and efficiency. Therefore, the concept of productivity and its complexity started being implemented not only by common people, but also by great personalities, such as Elon Musk who himself is the embodiment of productivity.

Ever since childhood, Musk embraced a rigid routine to achieve his goals, and today he can be considered one of the most successful personalities of the 21st century because he managed to reach majority of them. He built with ambition and discipline a successful entrepreneurial career, ruling simultaneously three companies: SpaceX, Tesla, and SolarCity. In the book “Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future”, the author Ashley Vance even added that all of them reflect the personality of Musk, and their advantages and disadvantages come exclusively from him (Vance, 2017, 238). Musk impacts the success of these companies and the organizational culture, his employees following him up to the point where everyone may put their personal lives aside for the sake of the company’s well-running. For this reason, on one hand, most of them praise him, and some even worship him, knowing that they can reach their full potential by working by his side, but, on the other hand, some may fear him since he can take drastic and relentless measures to ensure the success of the company (Vance, 2017, 238). Thus, the distinct leadership manner adopted by Musk is part of his authentic personal brand, which is also considered the most interesting and successful cases from the Rockefellers family to the present, fact stated by Cynthia Johnson, in her work “Platform: The Art and Science of Personal Branding” (Johnson. Platform, 2019, 140).

Besides having built three successful companies, his mission is to develop a strong personal brand. Similar to the famous character Tony Stark, Musk has “an idea to live and a purpose to dedicate” (Vance, 2017, 202). He has a powerful mission because in the early stages of his career he identified the “why?”, meaning the source of motivation that made him struggle even during hard times to achieve his mission. In his book “Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action”, Simon Sinek mentioned that there were only two effective ways to influence human behavior: through manipulation or through inspiration (Sinek, 2009, 18). Sinek also found that both questions “why?” and “how?” are connected to the limbic system, the part of the brain that is responsible for the behavior and decisions individuals make (Sinek, 2017, 25). The

“why?” as part of the Elon’s mission offers thorough consistency of his personal brand by influencing people to trust and follow his decisions.

When it comes to the methodological part of the current research, there are three main questions that require answers: “How does media impact the way individuals perceive productivity?”, “How does the exposure to Elon Musk’s storytelling influence the individuals’ behaviour?”, and “How does media influence the spreading of the productivity phenomenon?”. In this case, three qualitative and quantitative methods were chosen: the sociological survey, the content analysis, and the interview. Because of the new pandemic regulations, all three methods were applied online. The sociological survey is composed of 49 affirmations and questions which are dedicated to a sample formed by students, both males and females, aged between 18 and 28, from the University of Babeş-Bolyai. In total, the survey has received 139 responses, the majority of the subjects being students at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences. The predominant group was aged 18 to 22, mostly female. It is interesting to observe this dynamic because Elon Musk, in general, is an example of a masculine figure for males, and he is also active in a field where the predominant category of employees is formed of men. When it comes to productivity, the majority has quite a strong and positive opinion on how productive they usually are: 57.6% consider themselves to be productive persons, while 61.2% compare their productivity to others’ (59.7% of this percentage is not affected by others’ productivity and are productive nonetheless). In addition, 61.2% of the participants believe that media, Youtube especially, spread the phenomenon of productivity, and their answer helps us to understand better that even if they don’t follow an influencer or a content that promotes a productive lifestyle, they are still conscious that media contributed to the rise of this phenomenon.

The content analysis of over 20 videos of interviews of Elon Musk allowed us to observe the impact his words and his personal brand have on individuals. The majority of Youtube videos analysed have a lot of positive comments, which let us form a response to the question: “How does the exposure to Elon Musk’s storytelling influence the individuals’ behaviour?”. Some of the examples were: “If you win the morning, you win the day. That’s my best solution for increased productivity. It’s so crucial to start the day off doing something productive cause it’ll fire off a chain reaction.” by Keplar, and “I’ve been reading Elon Musk’s biography and I must say... Elon does some incredible things! He’s motivating me a lot while I’m going through my college classes.” by mynametrong (random student Washington University). They expressed their gratitude and the positive impact that his routine and objectives had on them. Furthermore, after 5 interviews taken with people who are familiar with personal brands, we could notice that storytelling plays a key role, but not an essential one, in the personal brand of a successful individual.

To conclude, this research paper has several limitations, such as the obstacles posed by the online environment, the honesty of the respondents, or the disproportionate gender balance. However, all research methods completed the study and provided enough information to answer the research questions. Elon Musk is an influential person who has built a strong personal brand around him, determining media to spread a lot of information about him. He is the example that ordinary people can choose to be extraordinary (MulliganBrothers, minute 4:50).

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#unsponsored:
**How Does 5GANG Influence the Purchase Decisions of Generation Z Through
Their Personal Brands Built on Instagram?**

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The current study explores the way 5GANG – a Romanian trap band consisting of vloggers – influences the purchase decisions of Generation Z through their Instagram personal brands, built with the use of the #unsponsored luxury fashion items they wear in public. The data were collected using a comparative content analysis and a sociological survey based on an online questionnaire. The comparative content analysis was applied to the content all five 5GANG members post on their Instagram accounts, as well as on content uploaded by 12 members of the 5GANG community. The sociological survey based on the online questionnaire was applied to a total of 273 Generation Z members. This study validates the existence of a dual attitude among Generation Z members regarding 5GANG due to their profoundly controversial public perception. At the same time, it confirms that 5GANG *does* influence the purchase decisions of our target audience, but only to a certain extent.

Generation Z is *the* generation that is born and raised in an era in which technology shapes their behavior in such a manner that makes it difficult to differentiate the everyday reality from the virtual one (Jain, Vatsa, Jagani, 2014, 18). That is because they do everything online – from gaming with their friends to the most important component of our human existence: socializing. (Jain, Vatsa, Jagani, 2014, 18) But despite their tendency to *live* their social life online rather than offline, they still rely on the feeling of belonging to a group. Therefore, „they reinforce this feeling by discussing the latest fashion trends, electronic gadgets, video games, online games, and music” with their friends (Jain, Vatsa, Jagani, 2014, 19).

Back in 2014, Jain, Vatsa, and Jagani discovered *the reason why* Generation Z aspires to own and wear luxury fashion clothing and how that correlates with their feelings of belonging to a group. Assuming that an important part of Generation Z comes from families whose material and financial status is average and above average, they noticed that: #1. Generation Z is one of the most materialistic generations, #2. Generation Z always tends to compare with its peer groups, #3. This generation often has access to their parents’ credit cards and generally receives considerable sums of money to spend (Jain, Vatsa, Jagani, 2014, 19).

Given that they spend most of their time online, it is natural for them to display the luxury goods they buy, also, *online*, where their peer groups are. The social media platform where Generation Z spends the most time online is Instagram, a predominantly visual social network. Back in 2018, Instagram reached the threshold of one billion active users (Choia, Sung, 2018, 2289), out of which globally more than half are under the age of 34 (Chen, 2020, 1), which means they’re part of Generation Z. The main reason why they use Instagram is to create a strong personal brand. (Vițelar, 2019, 261) That’s also why influencers such as the 5GANG members manage to build communities of millions on their Instagram profiles.

Their communities *see* the personal brands they create for themselves, admire them, and want to be like them. However, 5GANG’s personal brands are also reinforced by the musical genre they sing: *trap*. Thus, the current study aims to specifically identify how having a parasocial relationship with an influencer nowadays influences the luxury fashion clothing decisions of Generation Z. It does that through three research questions: #1. *How does 5GANG build their personal brands on Instagram in order to speak the language of Generation Z?*, #2. *How important*

is it that 5GANG has built a well-knit community around them when it comes to their audience's purchase decisions?, #3. To what extent does 5GANG influence its audience through the luxury fashion clothing brands they wear in public? This makes the current study the first one to research how Romanian influencers and the uprising trend of Romanian trap music influence the luxury fashion clothing purchase decisions of Generation Z.

Methodology

The methodology of the current study includes:

#1. A **comparative content analysis** applied to the content that all five 5GANG members post on their Instagram accounts, as well as to content uploaded by 12 members of the 5GANG community who frequently interact with their idols' posts. In conducting the content analysis, we started from the following research question: *How does 5GANG build their personal brands on Instagram in order to speak the language of Generation Z?* Thus, we developed a research tool that had as a starting point an analysis grid developed and applied by Wondwesen Tafesse and Bronwyn P. Wood in their 2020 study, „Followers' engagement with Instagram influencers: The role of influencers' content and engagement strategy”. Thus, our comparative analysis grid consisted of 11 criteria, such as: followers count, engagement, posts frequency, keywords.

#2. A **sociological survey based on the online questionnaire** applied to a total of 273 Generation Z members, aged between 8 and 21. In conducting this research method, we started from the following research question: *To what extent does 5GANG influence its audience through the luxury fashion clothing brands they wear in public?* The distribution of the questionnaire was done in three distinct stages: #1. it was distributed to approximately 15 of the Facebook communities dedicated to 5GANG members, #2. the questionnaires were distributed through middle school and high school teachers among as many classes as possible, #3. the distribution was done on several Facebook and WhatsApp groups of students. Thus, we developed a research tool consisting of three other *already* existing research tools, namely: # 1. A scale developed by Karina Sokolova and Hajer Kefi in their 2020 study, published in the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services: „Instagram and YouTube bloggers promote it, why should I buy? How does credibility and parasocial interaction influence purchase intentions”, #2. The Validation scale taken from the study conducted by Ravi Kumar in 2018 and published as „Scale for Advertising Effectiveness: A Study on Traditional and Interactive Advertisements as per The Lavidge and Steiner Model”, and #3. The Likert scale.

Results

The results obtained from the **first research question** revealed Generation Z members' *desire* to adopt the same outlook on life as the one exposed by 5GANG on social media. Their emphasis is on individualism, selfishness, narcissism, dedication to work and individual success (Kaluža, 2018, 32). According to Alex Williams, such a mentality is specific to Generation Z, because it promotes the belief that you are the *one* who's in charge for creating yourself. Thus, even if the Generation Z members do not vocally appreciate 5GANG, they still *envy* them, as they seem to live the kind of life Generation Z exponents also aspire to live (Williams, 2015, 1).

The answers obtained to the **second research question** concluded that there *is* uniformity regarding the interests Generation Z manifests on their social media accounts. This uniformity may or may not be directly influenced by what the 5GANG members post on their Instagram account. However, it *is* directly conditioned by their families' material and financial condition, because they don't own the means to afford luxury fashion clothing yet.

Last but not least, what the **third research question** shed light on *and* reinforced is that Generation Z's manifested desire to wear luxury fashion clothing depends on both #1. Their age, and #2. The material and financial condition of their families. Generation Z's motivations to purchase luxury goods are all about their desire to imitate rich individuals, respectively their need to be lenient with oneself. (Vigneron, Johnson, 2004, 488-489) The main influence in this case is

represented by the parents of Generation Z, namely Generation X, as the family background leaves a strong imprint on purchasing decisions. (Jain, Vatsa, Jagani, 2014, 19)

Conclusion

After a detailed exploration of the results of the current study, we drew some important conclusions. Starting from the central research questions, the results obtained were not in line with our expectations. They shed light on two distinct existing realities that are not convergent. Our research subjects' behavior diverges from the discourse they have online for the purpose of feeling socially accepted. Although the current study *did* answer all our research questions, it had its limitations. The most important limit is that none of the 5GANG members accepted to answer the questions we developed as part of an individual interview guide that we intended to conduct with *at least* one of them. Such limitations shed light on further research perspectives. As a first future research perspective, it would be interesting to research how 5GANG influences the buying habits of its audience through the #sponsored brands they promote. Another research perspective would be to carry out such a study applied to *a single* 5GANG member at a time, in order to be more specific. Last, but not least, a third further research perspective would be to study how 5GANG's community members' age correlates with the #sponsored objects they promote, and their fans are persuaded into buying.

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Reflections on the Communication Strategies for Romania's COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign

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The world experiences a situation that has not occurred before in history, a situation that is seen by everyone as a crisis, as a hold for the world and for the whole population. Because the pandemic is a controversial topic, the aim of the present work is to examine the communication strategies that are to be observed for the process of approaching the COVID-19 vaccination campaign towards the population. The theoretical framework concentrates on the types of communication, on representative models of that type, on their functions and meanings and on crisis situations and communication strategies. The content analysis focuses on three major levels: the level of sensitizing, the level of informing and the level of motivating. Structural and functional features and units have been assigned to each of these levels for analyzing essential examples and having a critical approach. Finally, the results are interpreted and further points of view and opinions of specialists and experts from different fields are added for a clear, coherent and precise conclusion.

Introduction

Nowadays the term crisis communication is a very present word, as we are constantly dealing with and experiencing a borderline situation. A crisis is “an incident that is unexpected, negative and overwhelming” (Barton, 2001, 2), that is, “specific, unexpected, and non-routine organizationally based event or series of events which creates high levels of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat to an organization’s high priority goal” (Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer 1998, 233).

The research question of this work is: Which communication strategies can be observed for the process of approaching the COVID-19 vaccination campaign towards the population? The observation takes place by means of a total of 10 videos, which count as broadcast TV spots and which are accessible on the YouTube page of the only public TV broadcaster in Romania, TVR.

The relevance and originality of this topic is given by the COVID-19 pandemic, a constant and less explored subject. At the beginning, no one knew how the virus came about, what happened and what the measures and preventive strategies are to overcome it. However, the year 2021 came of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences Babeș-Bolyai University with the vaccination, which remains the only preventive measure found so far. The vaccination campaigns provide access to sensitize, inform and motivate the audience, a process of understanding, memorizing, reflecting and transmitting the information and messages experienced (Martin, 2010, 1305-1306).

Methodology

The central point of this work is the analysis of the communication strategies for the vaccination campaign in Romania. The vaccination campaign includes 10 short TV spots that appeared on TVR December 25, 2020 - January 21, 2021. TVR is the only Romanian public television broadcaster. This campaign is created by the Government of Romania in partnership with TVR. All videos are also available on TVR's official YouTube page and focus on personalities from the Romanian health system who present vaccination and the benefits for a better life.

Based on the model by Tobias Martin (2010), the analysis focuses on the three generic terms shown, which must be viewed as levels: sensitizing, informing, motivating. Each level contains different sub-categories that uniformly detail the terms and create the overall picture of the work. These were developed from the several scientific models: Alter and Inderbitzin (2020) claim that the communicator can convey the messages well if he considers general expressions and terms, exemplary explanations, the linear sentence structure and the use of speaking pauses. For Rommerskirchen & Roslon (2020), topicality, openness, transparency, consistency and empathy are decisive elements for successful crisis communication. Another classification is that of Chiciudean and David (2011), who comprehensively explains the guidelines for action during communication: the inclusion of the relevant publics of the organization in the prevention and resolution of crises and the manifestation of honesty and openness. According to Voigt (2016), the most important characteristics of the news are diversity, relevance, impartiality, fairness and comprehensibility. For Gallo (2020) the right words and finding analogies for creating a message or a message during a crisis situation are the cornerstones of the strategy.

Results

The level of sensitization is defined by the empathy, revelation and subjectivity that build the speaker's compassion. It has been concluded that not only women engage in empathy because they are mothers and female figures, but men also use this technique to gain public interest and approach. This assumption was also viewed as a contradiction in terms of the establishment of certain analogies in the speech act because both genders intervene in analogies so that the recipient associates them with something familiar, human and known and acts trustingly. Facial expressions and gestures build bridges to create an atmosphere. Most speakers have created an empathic, open and adapted atmosphere so that the information is accessible to all parts of the public; others have created a more distant atmosphere. Some reasons for this are the wearing of uniforms, which are understood as the embodiment of the task and service, a symbol of respect, trust and fear and the age, which is a kind of handicap, because the elderly do not emphasize gestures and facial expressions creating a monotonous and unsafe environment.

The level of informing is about objectivity. Objectivity is also seen as informativity, which includes both the known and the unknown and conveys a more credible message. The assumption that empathic persons do not intervene in any part of objectivity was rejected because this element is fundamental. The informativity is influenced by the general statements because they reflect the continuity and duration of the whole campaign: one notices a uniform structure: the context of the pandemic, the vaccination and the appeal. A differentiation can be observed in the case of visibility as the number of views is very low one of the reasons being the speakers, all coming from the health sector and not being known by the people and another one being the preference of the watchers for private TV broadcasters.

The level of motivation is the result of sensitizing and informing. The motivation is explained by the appeal, by a solution-oriented prevention strategy that affects the whole population. The news about the vaccination immediately shows the prevention of the crisis situation and leads to the solution: reliving normal life once the pandemic is overcome. The alternation is between the target and the actual state of the vaccination, as the videos have different release dates. In this way, the information is conveyed by the public understanding, memorizing, reflecting and transforming what has been said.

Conclusion

At the level of sensitization, one should unconsciously arouse the feelings and emotions of the fellow human beings so that they are seen as the focus of the crisis situation and the prevention strategy. The more sensitive and empathic, the more conscious and solution-oriented the speakers appear. The level of informing is the fundamental extension of sensitizing: the first step in this process is to win the audience through empathy and the second step is to use objectivity to solidify the basis of what is conveyed. The level of motivating brings the activity and impact in the

foreground and leaves the passivity in the background. First you sensitize the audience through feelings and emotions, then you create the background and foundation of the entire campaign and lastly you motivate the population by creating an impact and an active state. Motivation can also be understood as an active involvement and interference in a certain process.

Considering the approaches of opinion leaders, one can draw further conclusions. Alina Bârgăoanu believes that the launch of the vaccination campaign has been a good start because one of the major challenges is developing scientifically validated, consensus-validated content on vaccines. The science should be superior to empathy. Sociologist Gelu Duminică believes that the greatest motivational tool is emotion because you must make it clear to the population that you should not get vaccinated for yourself, but for loved ones. For Oana Marinescu, the goal of the vaccination campaign is not clear because it is not clearly communicated and supported by the measures taken. Răzvan Cherecheș says that an information campaign that focuses on such a topic must leave emotions. He saw communication as dry, almost military. CNA stopped the vaccination campaign after almost a month because sending promotional materials for drugs or treatments presented or recommended by health professionals is prohibited.

Considering the research question and the conclusions of the analysis, certain types of communication strategies have been used throughout the process of approaching the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. Although attempts have been made to influence the population through the TV spots and successfully achieve the level of motivation and appeal, one could notice that the videos did not reach the audience. The aim of the campaign was therefore not achieved.

The outlook and the limits of the work can be seen as opening new perspectives and variants, because this new topic can be analyzed from several perspectives. Even more, a comparison between Romania and a western country would be possible, where the infrastructure and the constant development are brought to the fore. This comparison can show the differences and similarities in the implementation and communication of the actual vaccination campaign and thus create an overall picture.

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Analysis of the Facebook Posts of Bucharest's leading candidates for the 2020 local elections. Case study: Gabriela Firea versus Nicușor Dan.

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The Internet has been on the rise over the past two decades, and since then, people's lives have evolved greatly. For several years, social media has been at the center of its use and expansion in public, scientific, and personal matters. Communication and interaction is definitely the common goal of social media platforms and various other media. In addition, <social> refers to the cooperative part of these networks, whose main objective is to establish connections between people (Schmidt and Taddicken 2017, 5). For individual users in worldwide locations, social media platforms provide a place to communicate and exchange content, opinions and thoughts. As a result, an area is created where users can upload media content (text, video, images, and music) or enjoy existing content. On these platforms, likes, shares, and comments are seen as success indicators, which mean that people truly engage with the created content or persona (Schmidt and Taddicken 2017, 18). Also, success is linked to the distribution of a message in an online community as well as the amount of attention it receives (Schmidt and Taddicken 2017, 18). The social community (all members of the network) has the power to evaluate these indicators. The higher these key indicators are, the more successful the post's content area is. Therefore, the number of followers, comments and likes of a person plays an important role in social network analysis (Schmidt and Taddicken 2017, 18).

The social platform with the most active users in the world is Facebook. According to Statista in January 2021, the platform had 2.7 billion active users worldwide. Active users include those who have been active on Facebook within the last 30 days (Statista 2021). Social media platforms are social media products in collaboration with Web 2.0 and are available in different categories according to Schmidt et al. (2017). Facebook belongs to the “(social) network platforms” or social network sites (Schmidt and Taddicken 2017, 10). They work according to a simple mechanism: “Users can build a personal profile by registering a closed space, from which they can make social relationships with other users explicit by adding them to their friends or contacts” (Schmidt and Taddicken 2017, 10). And so, Facebook quickly became a platform where millions of individuals can access different content, domains or groups of people with similar interests. In Romania, as well as in many countries on the globe, Facebook occupies the title of favorite social platform among the population, with 12.57 million users in March 2021 (Statista 2021). A milestone in the Romanian history of Facebook was put in 2014, when Klaus Iohannis became the first politician in Europe to reach a million fans on Facebook. The Romanian President surpassed then the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the former President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy (Androniciuc 2018, 159). This can only demonstrate Romanians appetite for online politics, as well as the fact that Facebook has evolved into a fertile ground for political networking and political debates.

Elections express nowadays the most important democratic tool. The elections are followed by a time of heightened contact during which parties compete for votes, notoriety, and popularity. This exchange can now take place online thanks to the digitization and modernization of social media. In consequence, political parties and actors have discovered social media networks and are using them actively to communicate with voters. This allows political actors to innovate, allowing them to articulate their views more quickly and easily, as well as convey political messages more effectively. What is more important is that they became aware of the advantages of the online sphere, with Facebook becoming an indispensable tool in political campaigns. Furthermore,

political actors employ a variety of communication strategies and techniques with the aim of mobilizing the electorate to vote.

As a result of all that has been discussed above, this study aims to examine the relevant aspects of political communication through individual, clearly structured thematic blocks in order to filter and summarize relevant opinions on the leading candidates (Nicușor Dan and Gabriela Firea) from the Bucharest local election in 2020. The first question of the research wants to determine whether the Facebook platform is indeed a suitable environment for political actors to make their themes known during an election campaign. In this context, there is also a secondary research question: Do the two candidates Facebook posts feature male and female topics? This question addresses a very current subject, namely gender study, which is not sufficiently researched. The second research question aims to examine the strategies that emerge during the election campaign: Which campaign strategies do the candidates use? In a political campaign, communication strategies are crucial, which is why Rus's (2005) strategies were used to evaluate the existent communication strategies found on the two candidates Facebook pages during the election period.

As a consequence, for answering the above mentioned research a question, a systematic assessment method was needed. Also, Facebook posts were analysed using Philipp Mayring and Thomas Fenzl's (2019) qualitative content analysis. The expert interview was the second research method used to determine the plausibility and validity of the study's findings.

The current study's main purpose was to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Facebook platform in a local election campaign and to recognize the themes and strategies of this campaign. In this case, however, it is not about an ordinary local election campaign, but the fierce battle for the city hall of the capital city. The pressure of this local campaign has had a great influence on the political actors. The two main candidates, Gabriela Firea and Nicușor Dan, are not only known by the Bucharest people, but also by the vast majority of voters in Romania, because both of them are important players in the current political scene. They had several TV appearances, live debates and media appearances. Each step was followed and judged by the crowd.

The analysis results show that the voting population of Bucharest had a clear appreciation. Meaning, they had a concrete opinion about their future vote before the political battle between the two candidates even started (their fight is equated by many commentators as the fight between right and left ideology), so that the population belonged to a specific ideological niche.

Introduction

The central theme of this work was built around the local elections in Bucharest in 2020. As previously stated, this work aims to investigate the Facebook posts of the leading candidates in Bucharest in the 2020 local elections. Local elections are a valuable opportunity for residents of a city/county in Romania, as in other European countries, to vote on local administration. Local elections, on the other hand, provide an excellent opportunity for political actors to promote their own image, future projects, or party. Political actors employ not only traditional advertising methods, but also new media tools. As a result, the Facebook platform is the most powerful tool in this context, as it has the most global users and the fastest information dissemination (see Abstract). The topic's importance is demonstrated by the fact that these are the most recent elections.

In shaping the complex image of research, the profiles of the top candidates play an important role too. This topic was primarily chosen because of the political actors. Nicușor Dan and Gabriela Firea are the two leading candidates for Bucharest in the 2020 municipal elections. The two actors presented above are representative actors with extensive prior experience in the Romanian political scene and analyzing their Facebook posts is the only way to gain a more comprehensive view of their online political campaign. The importance of this topic is highlighted by the fact that these local elections have been heavily publicized on all TV channels and in the media, and the competition between the two was fierce.

The theoretical part of the work was based mainly on the following studies: Donges, P. und Jarren, O. (2011): Political communication in the media society; Rus, F. Călin (2005): The evolution of the communication process from the interpersonal to the political and media form;

Jarren, O. und Donges, P. (2006): Political communication in the media society as a research object; Hinz, Kay (2016): Candidates and their supporters in the online campaign. The Bundestag elections 2013 on the web 2.0; Hinz, Kay (2017): Activities on Facebook and Twitter about the 2013 federal elections: Online communication of candidates in the campaign. The originality of this research comes from the fact that 3 key points of an online election campaign are reached: the importance of the Facebook platform, thematic proposals and electoral strategy. There has been no other study that has conducted all three subjects at the same time, giving this thesis its uniqueness.

As mentioned in the abstract, the first research question concerns the Facebook platform: To what extent is Facebook a means for political actors to publish their topics during the election campaign period? In this context, a secondary research question arises: Do the two candidates' Facebook posts include male and female topics? The second research question examines the strategies that arise during the election campaign: What are the candidates' campaign strategies?

The analyzed cases are the two main candidates Facebook profiles, Nicușor Dan and Gabriela Firea. Nicușor Dan is a Romanian mathematician, activist and politician. His first contact with political life was in 2008, when he founded the "Salvați Bucureștiul" Association (Ziare.com, 2021). As a result, he won many city planning and abuse lawsuits against Bucharest City Hall. He is also one of the founders and former presidents of the USR party. In 2012 and 2016 he ran for general mayor of Bucharest, but only in the municipal elections of 2020 was he elected mayor of the capital city with 42.8% of the votes. In 2020, he ran as an independent, but was strongly supported by the PNL and USR Plus parties (Agerpres, 2021). Gabriela Firea, the former general mayor of Bucharest, will be his opponent in the 2020 local elections. Gabriela Firea is a former journalist and politician. Her political career began in 2000, when she was appointed PR of Prime Minister Mugur Isărescu and government PR after a long career in the press, radio, and television (Ziare.com, 2021). Gabriela Firea has been a Social Democratic Party member since 2012 and is currently running for Senate. She will then work as a journalist for Victor Ponta's presidential campaign in 2014. She served as general mayor of the capital city from 2016 to 2020, with the PSD government's support (Ziare.com, 2021).

Methodology

A qualitative method of research, namely content analysis, was chosen to answer these questions in the first place. This central research method is suitable for current research, as it can be followed and checked intersubjectively because it is separated into individual analysis phases. A total of 291 Facebook posts were analyzed successfully, 169 of which belong to Nicușor Dan and 122 to Gabriela Firea. The goal of the content analysis is to conduct a systematic, theoretical, and rule-based analysis of written communication (Mayring/ Fenzl cited according to Baur/ Blasius, 2019, 633). The expert interview was the second research method and it was chosen to determine the plausibility and validity of the findings of this study. Its aim is to confirm the above findings and to expand the scientific horizons of the current research. Two experts, Dr. Associate Assistant Dorin Spoaller and University Lecturer Dr. Mihnea S. Stoica, were selected for this research method, each with extensive experience in the fields of online public relations (Facebook) and political communication.

Results

According to the use of Facebook as a medium in the election campaign, the performed analysis corresponds to the theoretical studies (see chapter 2.5.2). First and foremost, the analysis revealed that Facebook facilitates political participation and aids in the filtering of target groups (Steenkamp/Hyde-Clarke, 2012, cited in Tănase, 2014, 146). So, in this case, there was no post that did not draw the attention of the public. The number of comments, distributions, views, and reactions demonstrates that Facebook is thus a conducive environment that brings a high level of responsiveness (feedback) and global distribution. At the same time, the Facebook algorithm filters out the information to the right people. As a result, people with politically similar interests are being directed to political actors who share the same vision. This was especially true in the case of the

Firea campaign. Her supporters were popularly associated with the following characteristics: traditional family, Orthodox Christians, and senior citizen. Their life, political, and administrative visions are largely similar to the left candidate's, and they unconditionally support Gabriela Firea as she supports her own life values.

Conclusion

The role Facebook plays as a communication medium has had a huge impact in this current study. In the online environment, policy is once again a subject of interest and generates a wide range of responses. When political messages seem indecipherable in a political tv-program, political actors use on Facebook a friendly, concise, and clear language to bond with their voters and in some cases share their personal lives (that creates a feeling of togetherness, a sense of cohesiveness). In consequence, it's fair to conclude that the Facebook platform is an important tool for political actors to publicize their political themes during election campaigns. A first observation of this license can arise in connection with the first secondary research question: The election campaign's themes are influenced by the candidates' gender. This observation responds to the related research question in an affirmative manner: Yes, male and female issues were observed during the election campaign. The final research question concerns the election campaign strategies employed by political actors. The strategies were analyzed according to Rus (2005) and yes, the candidates have used strategies in their election campaigns. These policies certainly had an important impact on voters, but they were unaware of their existence.

To conclude, all three research questions revealed satisfactory results, and they pursued the political battle of the Bucharest local elections on three plans: The online environment (Facebook), the subjects discussed (male or female topics), and the strategies employed. Based on these findings, it is reasonable to conclude that these three aspects outline a comprehensive analysis not only of the electoral campaign but also of the political actors involved, and that their electoral process has been followed specifically in relation to these aspects.

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Means of Expression of the Romanian Cultural Identity in Commercials in 2020

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Introduction

It goes without saying that we live in a world of globalization. The Internet plays an important role as it can connect people from all around the world in less than a second. This means that the news travels very fast, but not only them. The civilizations start to borrow diverse cultural elements from other parts of the world. Slowly it seems that the whole world starts to collide and no longer be culturally diverse. Cultural influences are part of evolution but a nation without culture is nothing.

What about the Romanian cultural identity? The following paper concentrates on whether the Romanian cultural identity is reflected in the commercials that have been aired in 2020, so the main research question is ‘Which modes of expression are being reflected in the commercials in 2020?’ For having clear understandings of the main topic there have been added a couple of additional questions like ‘Are the commercials which have cultural Romanian elements perceived as more Romanian as the ones who lack them?’ or Are there any significant differences between YouTube commercials and TV commercials?’

Culture is an important element for a nation and it represents its identity. It is something common for the people. Being able to preserve the culture can lead to a long history of a nation. Through globalization it is easier to reach out to certain items that came from the other side of the world. In a store you can find brands from all over the world that can bring in nation new cultural elements or it can be form fitted on that culture. Advertising has a really big impact on the culture and the cultural changes that happen in the world. It can embed local symbols as well as the global ones.

The foundation of the paper can be observed in the theoretical part of the research. The main points of it are going to be presented in the following. The scientist Klaus Beck takes the view that communication can be seen as a double-sided process (comp. Beck, 2007, 15). In advertising this process can be easily observed, the brands are communicating; consumers receive the information and react to it.

The most important phenomenon described in the paper is culture. Many scientists have researched this area because of its complexity, history and shared experience among the nations. Gerhard Maletzke has done a lot of studies in this field and describes culture as a knowledge transfer between the people of a nation and their culture. Culture shapes the way people think and behave as well as people help in the culture transformation (Comp. Maletzke, 1996). On the other hand, there are scientists who assume that the cultural identity is only a resource which develops around the people of a nation in order not to die.

The Romanian people have also been defined for a better understanding of the culture through some main characteristics. Tradition is very important for the nation and the people are often seen as hospitable and tolerant but also pessimistic and fatalistic. Adaptability is almost synonymous with the Romanian people which can be an advantage; they can handle every situation, but also a disadvantage because it can be perceived as superficial.

Methodology

The research paper has used two research methods, a content analysis and two expert-interviews. Thirty commercials were examined for the first method. The first 20 were TV commercials and were chosen upon the criteria of the increasing advertising budget for 2020 (Petre,

2021). The following ten were part of a top made by IQads containing the most viewed commercials on the platform YouTube in 2020 (o.A, 2021). For this part, a codex has been built in order to study the commercials upon predefined criteria with the intention of analyzing the content both qualitative and quantitative.

The second method is the expert interview. Two experts were chosen, one from the advertising field and one from the culture field. Dr. Paul Fărcaș (advertising) and Dr. Maria Mustățea (culture) answered each six questions, among the six, three were common and three were focusing on each of them field expertise.

Results

The results from the content analysis were interpreted under three focus points: focus family, focus tradition and focus long-term orientation. Focus family showed that family has been a main element in a lot of commercials in 2020. It is one of the main characteristics of the Romanian nation which can be stated from the dimension analysis made by Geert Hofstede (1993). A feminine culture seeks belonging and has a strong care feeling for others.

Focus tradition proved that the Romanian tradition elements are timeless and often used in commercials. Among the ones that were found were traditional people, music, objects or more contemporary but emblematic like festivals.

The long-term orientation is another dimension studied by Geert Hofstede (o.J). Even though Romania gain the number of points that placed it in the middle field, the results from the analysis pointed out that tradition can easily merge with new elements. For example, in the Telekom spot the main character which is portrayed a traditional man wanted internet even in the farthest place.

The interviews outlined important aspects. On the one hand, it is really important for the brands to know their target audience in order to communicate through the right channel the best information. On the other hand, even though tradition is really important for the Romanian culture, the younger generation because of globalization tends to accept very fast new trends. Television is still an important means of communication, but the internet, more precisely, YouTube gives the creators more freedom. It is easier to target the audience through the internet and the reactions can be measured in a simple way.

Conclusion

Even if the scientific paper is not yet finished, there are some interesting results that can be observed. Culture is very important for the Romanian people, but there is also a growing trend for new and diverse. Having cultural elements in commercials, only to show that the brand is Romanian can worsen the situation, not improve it. On the other hand, advertising has always been a means that helped change and change was made through it. Globalization may accelerate the change, but the core values of a nation will always remain the same.

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Intercultural Communication in Advertising: A Social Media Content Analysis for the Beiersdorf-Nivea's Instagram Account

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Introduction

Undoubtedly 2020 was a special year. Not necessarily in the good sense, but certainly not in the worst possible way. It was a lesson for many people and the chance for society to realize how lucky one can be just by heaving health, family and friends. Of course, depending on experience, one's perception of 2020 can constantly change. Let's not forget, however, that people have faced a lethal virus, which has affected all levels of society. Thus, 2020 remains the year of change and desire to remain united even in difficult times.

Economically speaking the biggest victims were the brands, small or large. Facing sudden changes, initiatives that had to be changed again and again and readjusted to the new laws and political regulations created expenses and losses. These often lead unexpectedly to drastic decisions, like abandoning the market. While analyzing the brands on social media, a post on the Instagram of the brand Beiersdorf–NIVEA came to public's attention.

Beiersdorf NIVEA is a global skin and body care brand with an exemplary success story that began in Hamburg. In 1882 the pharmacist Carl Paul Beiersdorf founded the company 'Beiersdorf', which later 1890 was bought by the pharmacist and businessman Dr. Oscar Troplowitz. He modernized the production processes, made his first international contacts and expanded the company considerably (Işoraitë 2015, 176f). On March 24, 2020, the brand posts on its German Instagram account (@nivea_de), a really surprising and emotional picture. The picture represents a nonverbal gesture, a typical greeting ritual (brofist), through which the main actors belong to different ethnicities. A month later, on April 22 2020, on its Romanian Instagram account one can identify the same picture, but with a slightly change: there are no longer two actors of different ethnicities. There are two actors about the same ethnicity – clearly visible by the same skin tone of the two Caucasian actors. At the same time in Germany the '#fürmehrmiteinander' (#formoretogether) movement is helping societies to the 'fight' for tolerance, love and equality. It was expected that the Romanian branch would also follow the example. The same theme or at least the same thematic direction could have been approached in Romania as well, as the community is also constantly facing both ethnic and sexual-orientation discrimination. Having support and a modern perspective from the west-initiative could have opened modern perspective in society. Instead, Nivea Romania focused its strategy on the #grijadeacasa (#takecare) movement and stood out of political approaches. As an overview, one cannot see a promotion of diversity, tolerance, acceptance or clear signs of fighting discrimination against the LGBTQ community or racial discrimination from the Romanian side.

According to Kloss (2012), global brands such as Nivea seem to identify themselves in marketing strategies as 'standardized' – "understood by all recipients of the international target group in the intended sense" (Dmoch, 1999, 180). The classification of a brand as global does not necessarily mean that this brand is also globally standardized in terms of: brand name, product, packaging or advertising. In fact, not that many global brands meet this requirement. The marketing mix of these brands is almost always adapted to local needs, i.e. global brands are seldom really identical in all markets (Kloss, 2012, 406).

Therefore, the present study wants to discover to what extent the brand's posts on the two social media accounts (@nivearomania, respectively @nivea_de) follow the strategy of a standardized advertising preposition, while taking into consideration the values of the brand, but

also the quote found on NIVEA's official website: "Whether you are a man or a woman. Young or old. You have light or dark skin. You have dry or oily skin. Sensitive or normal. Or in between. We care about your skin, everyone's skin. For life."

It is expected that the Romanian page starts to use a more diverse cultural approach. Therefore, a main criterion in establishing this research is the cultural value of the country where the brand is standardized – in this particular case, Romania. In other words, the Romanian cultural values, which were often mentioned in the scientific works of Hofstede (2010) and Schwartz (2014) have to be identified in the advertising posts of the Romanian Instagram account. Also, to better determine to which extent the Romanian account follows its cultural approach, the German account will join as a comparison. Therefore, it has to also follow its specific German culture while posting its advertisements on Social Media.

Methodology

The study promotes the idea of diversity and openness to future advertising campaigns, focuses on the social-cultural approaches existing in society during the pandemic of Coronavirus and offers a new perspective on the vision of marketing standardization strategy.

With the help of content analysis, the present research examines (due to its main research question) whether the branding and communication elements of the Nivea brand are more likely to pursue a German or a Romanian cultural tendency in Romanian advertising. In addition, the research is limited by three elements: time span, media channels and type of advertising. The investigation follows the posts of the German and Romanian Instagram user accounts of the Nivea brand during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Because many posts are not posted on both accounts at the same time, it is impossible to choose a specific date to start the analysis. Nevertheless, in order to get the best possible agreement between the analysis of the German and Romanian contributions, it was chosen the date between February 26, 2020 (when the first case of the Coronavirus was registered in Romania) and August 26, 2020 (during half a year of the pandemic). The categories for analysis contain cultural trends, which will be analyzed thanks to the quantitative and qualitative evaluation

The quantitative criteria include written elements such as text in the description of the image, as well as hashtags or reactions of the followers (views, likes and comments); and visual elements of the posts, such as: type of image (photo / video / text) and what the image focuses on: advertising the product, contact with people or the coronavirus pandemic. The quantitative criteria include three types of elements: advertising, culture and branding. Although it is a comparison between Romania and Germany, the focus remains on the Romanian advertising strategy rather than the German one. Using the results of this content analysis, suggestions for improving future brand communication are to be formulated.

Results

The study shows that the two Instagram pages are not as different as they seem. Even if they do not share the same cultural values, from a visual and stylistic point of view, they share the same template in the advertised image. From a textual point of view, in Romania, the sentences used in the textual description of products are much shorter and more interpretable (a criterion specific to a High-Context society such as Romania, according to Hall). On the other hand, the descriptions of the posts on the German page are more complex, detailed and not so interpretable (specific to a low-context society).

In terms of followers and reactions, Germany exceeds almost 10 times the average values of Romania. This is no surprise for the research, because Nivea is one of the largest skin- and body-care brands in Germany. Among the most approached themes of the brand, the Romanian Instagram account promotes: skincare routines, the Coronavirus pandemic situation, products made from natural ingredients and environmental issues. In addition, the German Instagram Account adds the LGBTQ+ community, tolerance and love and giveaway competitions.

Culturally speaking, both posts respect and promote the values of the Beiersdorf – NIVEA brand. In terms of national cultural values many contradictions were to be noticed. For example, Romania is considered by Schwarz a hierarchical society with a high level of mastery. Regardless no post gave the impression that Romania would be a hierarchical society in the advertised posts. Neither the criteria for the mastery society were to be seen in the posts of the brand. In terms of Schwarz's cultural values, Romania resembles more to Germany. Even the cultural values mentioned by Hofstede are hardly noticed in Romania. The Romanian Instagram page follows the German cultural values rather than the Romanian ones.

Conclusion

It can be said, as a general conclusion that, overall, the brand's posts have a standardized feature, resembling each other very well - by following the same pattern. But regarding the standardization at social and cultural level, according to the Hofstede-Schwarz pattern, the Instagram page in Romania does not respect the (national) cultural values. Whether the society is adapting to new needs, remains to be determined in a future study. Thus, the study states the idea that the Nivea brand pursues an international standardization strategy. At the same time, it answers the research question and demonstrates that the branding and communication elements of the Nivea brand strategy are more likely to pursue a German cultural trend in Romanian advertising- being also the values of a modern brand, with a Western mentality.

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Intercultural Communication for Nivea

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Introduction

The image of women in advertising has been and still is a controversial topic. And the discussion can become even more controversial from culture to culture. For this reason, this research paper is about adapting a brand to certain cultures and how women are represented from the perspective of this brand in two different countries. Before the practical part it was necessary to define certain important terms for this research. The first theoretical aspect defined was communication. Why this term? The term communication was chosen based on the fact that a message is communicated through advertising. The respective brand chooses to communicate with potential customers through advertising. The communication scientist, Paul Watzlawick, formulates the following principle: "You cannot not communicate, because all communication (not just with words) is behavior and as you cannot not behave, you cannot not communicate." After defining the term communication, it is very important to differentiate between the types of communication. In order to deepen and better understand the phenomenon, the division was made.

The next extremely important concept for the paper is the term cultural communication. These chapters explain the importance of a culture and how it is constructed, and then go into detail. Starting with the onion diagram, which explains the symbols, heroes, rituals and values, the author compares the culture to an onion because of the skins which in his vision correspond to the different levels of culture. Depending on their proximity, the four elements of this diagram can be influenced or changed more quickly. Then the differences and cultural standards that may exist depending on each country and culture are explained. At the end, the stereotypes and prejudices that can appear for each culture and for each person are explained.

The next chapter is dedicated to advertising. The phenomenon of advertising is very important nowadays and can advantage or disadvantage a brand or a public person. It is very important how a brand or a person manages to position themselves in the minds of consumers. Equally important are the strategies that brands use to attract their target audience.

The last chapter is dedicated to the image of women in advertising. This is a controversial topic. If we consider that not long-ago women did not have the same rights as men and it appeared in advertisements only in a certain way, it is interesting to see if this perception of women has changed or remained the same.

The theoretical part includes 4 chapters, described above. The practical part consists of two research methods. The first research method is content analysis and the second research method is the interview with experts.

Methodology

The research questions that were used are: to what extent has the Nivea brand adapted to German and Romanian values and how are the women represented in German and Romanian commercials for various Nivea product categories. The analyzed brand is Nivea and the two analyzed countries are Germany and Romania. Why these two countries? This decision was made because Germany is the founding country of Nivea and because the two countries have both common and different cultural characteristics. The time span 2015 and 2020 is examined. The year 2015 was selected because it is the common year in which there are commercials on YouTube for both countries. A total of 91 commercials from both countries were analyzed, 60 of them from Romania and 31 from Germany.

For the relevance of the work, the videos have been divided into product categories, so that we can observe how the women are presented based on each category. In order to be able to analyze the commercials, a code book was set up which contains two categories, one formal and one content-related. The formal relates to the media material, while the content focuses on the cultural characteristics and the portrayal of women. Six categories of products were set up: deodorant, facial cleanser, sunscreen, creams (face cream, body cream, handcream, universal cream), shower gel and hair products (shampoo, balm, hairspray, dry shampoo).

The code book consists of two categories: formal and content. All promotional materials that are examined are available on YouTube, on Nivea's channels in Germany and Romania. These need to be investigated. The formal category deals with the country where the commercial was published, the link, the date, the length of the video, the product and whether there are faces or just voices and whether the video contains text. The content category examines the issue of whether certain social issues are addressed, the relation to the country: symbols, appearance, and notoriety of the actress in the commercial and cultural peculiarities: stereotypes.

Two expert interviews were carried out for this scientific work. The first interview was with Associate professor Anamaria Felicia Tomiuc. She is Vice-dean at the Faculty of Art and Design from Cluj-Napoca. The second interview was with Asist. Andreea Voina. She works in the Department of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising and a PhD candidate in Political Science in the Faculty of Politics, Administration and Communication Sciences.

Results

Based on the research question, one can observe that the advertising strategies are designed differently in the two countries. On the one hand, a more aggressive method is used in Romania, in which the products are advertised through repetition, in order to plant the company's ideas in the consciousness of the target groups. In Germany the strategy is totally opposite in that one wants to reach people through correct and strong advertising. You can see these facts exactly because the number of available Romanian spots is much larger than the number of German advertisements. The analysis revealed that Nivea products appeal to women at different stages of life, with a certain product becoming more important for each stage. Women who are shown in underwear, in the shower or in a towel after the shower are represented as sexual objects in advertisements. The products that are part of this type of women's representation are sunscreens, body creams, shower gels, and some hair products. In deodorant advertisements, women appear in multiple roles, both as athletes, an example of which would be Anca Surdu, and as friends doing various activities on a normal day. Other female representations are: lovers, where it is shown how they prepare for a meeting, or as a successful woman, an example of this would be Andreea Ibacka's commercial for Nivea. For sun creams and other types of cream, women are also represented as mothers. In contrast to the advertisements for deodorant or facial cleanser, the average age is smaller than in commercials for creams, is it sunscreen or whatever. The reason for this is that these women are often portrayed as mothers so that the women can be at home with the people in which spots can identify, no matter what age they are in. Example of this would be the anti aging creams. Another method that should bring it closer was the selection of the colors in the commercials. In both countries, the chromatic was chosen to match the Nivea colors, i.e. blue-white, so that both the actresses match the product, but also so that the viewer can take on this matching composition, so everything is made more personal. It can be said that Nivea applied through well-known personalities in order to gain greater notoriety.

Conclusion

As a first conclusion, it could be observed that Romania uses a more aggressive and repetitive strategy. Advertising uses a repetitive strategy to more easily fix the products in the minds of potential customers. On the other hand, this strategy can lead the potential customers to the phenomenon of overcrowding that can have negative effects, such as apathy, avoidance, refusal to follow ads, even blocking them. On the other hand, creative and innovative ideas can lead to

diversity and avoid the negative effects. After the analysis, it was found that women are often portrayed as a sexual object in commercials. It has been confirmed that sexuality sells. One of the most popular myths in the advertising industry is that women are mostly portrayed as objects in advertising. This strategy has deep roots in the history of advertising and has often reflected moments from the social, political and economic realities of the particular age.

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Employer Branding on Online Platforms. The Positioning of it Companies in Cluj-Napoca

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Introduction

The employment market is constantly changing. In a city like Cluj-Napoca, which is also known as the “Silicon Valley” of Transylvania, the market is currently booming: the good universities in Cluj-Napoca, the attractive city and other factors provide many young experts in technological domains, which leads to the fact that more and more international IT companies have settled down in the eastern European city during the last few years. In order to attract and retain talented students, graduates and young professionals, IT companies in Cluj-Napoca need to adapt and find strategies to present themselves as an attractive employer. The companies of specific domains are in huge competition with each other, trying to grow and benefit from the talent that the city provides.

This is where *employer branding* becomes relevant. Nowadays, it is not enough to provide an attractive salary, benefits like medical insurance, snacks at the office and a nice working space. Employees feel the need to identify themselves with the brand values of their employer, to be supported in their own personal goals and vision and to find a workplace where they can self-develop.

The main topic of the current study is *employer branding* and how brands manage to represent themselves as attractive employers on the job-market of Cluj-Napoca. The study is based on employer branding theories and is implemented methodologically for a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of online publishing platforms of the top employers in Cluj-Napoca and an expert interview.

The main theories contain the definition of an *employer brand* by the German Employer Brand Academy (DEBA), which describes it as a “firmly anchored, unmistakable image of a company as an employer” (DEBA, 2006, 5). Therefore, *employer branding* as a process is the “internal and external positioning of a company or an institution as an employer, brand based on brand strategy” and aims to “activate the optimization of employee recruitment, employee retention, corporate culture and performance culture” (DEBA, 2006, 9). The Employer Value Proposition is a concept which describes the promise, that a company makes to their future employees and why they should join the company and it is comparable with the unique selling proposition in product marketing (Trost, 2009, 16). The fundamental elements of *employer branding*, named as functional and emotional benefits, values, brand personality, positioning, and differentiation of a brand (Barrow & Mosley, 2011, 58-68) are used to identify which ones of these elements the employer uses on their online-publishing platforms. Another relevant theory is the Employer Brand Mix, which includes the external reputation, CSR activities, support and induction, learning and development, reward and recognition as well as the working environment as its components (Barrow & Mosley, 2011, 149-155). The Employer Brand Mix components are also being identified on the online-publishing platforms. For them to be analyzed, several online-publishing platforms were chosen out of the examined literature: the company’s website, online job boards and social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, XING, and Instagram. These were divided into general-interest and special-interest channels (Chikato & Dannhäuser, 2020, 39).

The goal of the study is to find out how IT companies of Cluj-Napoca present themselves as employers on the market, which online platforms they use and why employer branding is important

for companies on the job market. Therefore, the top three employers from the IT industry from Cluj-Napoca (Hipo.ro, 2018), namely NTT DATA, Endava and Bosch, were chosen to be analyzed.

Methodology

The research questions are the following:

Q1: How do IT companies from Cluj-Napoca present themselves from the perspective of employer branding in online media?

Q2: Which online publishing platforms do the IT companies from Cluj-Napoca mainly use to position themselves as employers on the market?

The study contains a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the companies' content published on general-interest and special-interest online channels.

For the qualitative and quantitative content analysis, the criteria included:

- The existence of the company's page on the respective platform,
- The link,
- The name of the page,
- Number of followers,
- The audio-visual representation (text, image, video),
- The number of words used in the company's description,
- The positioning as a local, national or global employer,
- Target audience,
- Data and facts,
- Tonality,
- Employer Value Proposition (functional and emotional benefits),
- Employer Brand Mix (external reputation, CSR activities, support and induction, learning and development, reward and recognition, working environment).

Results

The study's results show how the employers position themselves, what their main focus and target audience is and how they differentiate themselves. The target groups of NTT DATA are career starters, experienced specialists as well as the stakeholders. The development of employees is important for the company, so that the company can also develop itself. NTT DATA positions itself as national company but uses English as their main language on the website, Romanian on the job boards and mostly English on social media. Of the elements of the EVP, the fundamental elements of employer branding and the employer brand mix, only fundamental elements are mentioned on social media. In contrast to the other companies, NTT DATA is the only company to offer testimonials from current employees, as well as pictures of the interior of the office, on the website.

Endava, on the other hand, only indicates potential employees and stakeholders as target groups. The technology, high performance and quality, as well as the corporate culture are important for the company, which represents Endava as a place for the development of the employees. At Endava, the focus is on employees. In contrast to the other companies, Endava uses the English language consistently on all platforms and is the only company to position itself internationally.

Bosch is the only company that also has students as a target group, alongside potential employees and stakeholders. They too rely on technology, quality and employee performance that improve the quality of life around the world. They position themselves nationally in Romania and as a global network. Bosch names the most elements of the EVP, the fundamental elements of employer branding and the employer brand mix, and these are completely covered on the website. Bosch also names the most functional advantages.

Conclusion

The answer to Q1 is that the companies use both functional and emotional benefits to attract employees, but the main focus for them are the emotional benefits. They also use elements of the

fundamental elements of employer branding and elements of the Employer Brand Mix, but not equally much. Every company has a main focus on each platform and the focuses differ between the companies.

The answer to Q2 is that IT companies in Cluj-Napoca use all the analyzed platforms but with the main focus on their company website. There, the longest texts were found, as well as the most benefits, fundamental elements and elements of the Employer Brand Mix. Some companies use different languages on different platforms and the different platforms show a different target audience. Also, some texts on the online job boards show not to be regularly updated, which results in the company not caring equally much about every platform they are represented on.

The limits of the paper are that the companies that were chosen were names as the top 3 employers of Cluj-Napoca in the year 2018, the survey not being repeated after. The employers of choice of Cluj-Napoca may have changed since 2018. The analysis could be repeated with the current employees of choice for more relevant information. Another limit is the geographical limitation to companies that are in Cluj-Napoca, as well as the limitation to analyzing only online-publishing platforms.

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Romanian Internet Users' Perspective on Privacy Issues

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Managing private information online has become a pivotal part of the media literacy department and often discussed topic. With the line between private and public life blurring, privacy issues raised many issues with an undeniable rise in mistrust in companies who mine data (Trepte & Masur, 2017). Reviewing previous studies concluded on the topic, there was a need for similar research with a focus on Romanian internet users. The paper aims to fill the gap and measure the opinion, knowledge, and level of concern of Romanian internet users about data collection and tailored advertisement.

Introduction

As we enter the age of the internet and our lives have also gone online, we have grown to think about information and information transfer from a new perspective. Going online nowadays does not only mean receiving information but also transferring. The increasing use of the internet over the past years has led to an increase in the amount of data collected (Castells, 2009) which because of technological improvements, has a long-lasting character and the bits of information can be accessed with ease. (Masur, 2018)

Information left behind by individuals by posting, navigating social media and other websites, and searching leaves behind a trail of information data, that can later be collected and used by advertisers, companies, and other entities to shape and transform a website to fit the users' needs. Additionally, advertisers can tailor their ads to suit their target audience. By doing this, companies have a bigger chance to maximize profit and gain s. (Kruikemeier et al., 2019). This has dramatically impacted interpersonal communication and the concept of self-disclosure.

Masur (2018) argues "under the condition of being permanently online and permanently connected, it seems that people are more inclined to disclose themselves or might even perceive the necessity to disclose themselves and produce a form of self-transparency." (p. 21) thus, blurring the line between private and public. Going from this new flow of information, Masur (2018) writes about two different dynamics developing. Horizontal dynamics are characterized by human interactions (face to face). Whereas vertical dynamics refers to the interactions between companies and their users and the amount of data a company receives, which is later used or sold.

Taking this into account, users' actions have become far more valuable than most realize. Data can be stored, owned, and analyzed, and used by companies (Joinson & Paine, 2012) and unprecedented technological development has made it far easier to store, manage and collect data. (Nissenbaum, 2009). As technological advancements are made, being willingly, permanently connected to the internet has unavoidably blurred the line between our private and public persona, as information has become just one "click" away. Personal data has evolved to hold monetary value for companies seeking to understand their target audience. Acquisiti (2014) distinguishes between two types of data transactions: the first one recalls a situation in which an individual is required to give put their private information to receive a good or service. For example, such a transaction can happen during an online purchase. In the second type, the user is not always directly involved in the data transaction. Such situations involved data-holding firms or seemingly "free" websites (such as blogs, free streaming services, search engines, etc.) which collect their fee in user data. These

companies can later sell their data to marketing and advertising companies, this gaining monetary value. This has unavoidably raised many concerns about privacy and security.

Privacy as a concept can be most notably defined as “the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others.” (Westin, 1967). Previous research suggests an increase in the level of concern when it comes to internet privacy (Trepte & Masur, 2017), however, little to no research was conducted in Romania leaving space for discovering the level of privacy literacy and possible concerns for this target group. Thus, the research question goes as follows: *What are the perspective of internet users from Romania on the topic of data collection and tailored advertisement.*

Methodology

The research uses quantitative research methods to answer the previously mentioned research question. An online questionnaire was created and sent out on a variety of social media platforms. The questionnaire included 36 and was divided into 7 sections, each handling a different issue. Additionally, participants were not only asked about their knowledge on the subject, but also their opinion using a 7-level scale: total disagreement, disagreement, neither agreement nor disagreement, partly agreement, total agreement and I do not know. Another section dealt with the usage of different protective methods against data collection, as told by the participants. Participants were given 6 answer possibilities, starting from “never” going to “rarely”; “occasionally” “often” “very often” with an additional “I don’t know possibility”. The data collection took place in May 2021 and received 101 responses.

Results

As previously mentioned, the survey managed to gain 101 responses. One of the main questions that the study emphasizes is the level of concern and how much are Romanian internet users bothered by the data collecting and tailored advertisement they receive.

Figure 1. The level of agreement regarding data collection

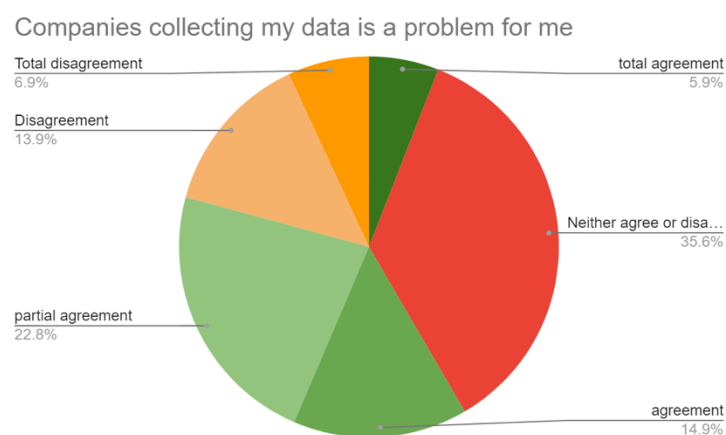


Figure 1 depicts the result of the question regarding how much is data collecting bothersome. We can conclude that Romanian internet users tend to be impartial on the subject, with a slight tendency towards saying that data collection is a concern for them. However, the data concluded that the same impartial tendency tends to be present also when it comes to tailored ads, which shows similar results.

To avoid data collection, most of the participants said they would not give applications and websites access to the microphone, camera, location, and contacts, unless necessary. Interestingly enough, even if most of the people asked are knowledgeable on the data privacy topic and disclosed that they have a certain level of concern, question 6.3 revealed that even if the concerns exist, they rarely or never not visit a site just because they have to give up a certain amount of information. Therefore, the information or service they seek on the internet has become more important than their online privacy.

Conclusion

To answer the research question, Romanian internet users have a good basic understanding of privacy literacy however; specifics on the topic such as tailored ads have divided the opinions of the users. This research paper aims to mainly get a basic understanding of the perspective of Romanian internet users on the topic. We have to take into consideration the possibility of a “privacy paradox” as in users, even though they display a high level of concern regarding their online privacy, their behavior does not match up with what they do. (Masur, 2018) This leads to possible future research regarding the topic and this research could be used as a foundation to build an intricate, more detailed insight into the matter.

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The Role in the Social Media of the Influencers Who Became a Mother

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Nowadays, due to the digitalization, consumers are becoming more educated as media users and more critical of commercial messages. The influencer marketing places itself in a continuous expansion, appearing more and more niches. An influencer is who has the power to affect the decisions of others because of his or her authority, knowledge, position, or relationship with his/her audience, or is activating in a distinct niche, with whom he or she actively engages. Therefore, an influencer is someone who has built an enthusiastic audience. Influencer marketing is a type of social media marketing that uses endorsements and product mentions from influencers – individuals who have a dedicated social following and are viewed as experts within their niche. Influencer marketing is developing today through the intensive use of social media networks in a much more dynamic and fast-moving context.

One of the niches of the influencer marketing, which is growing significant nowadays, is the one of motherhood and baby/children's products. Out in the market are fashion or beauty influencers who after becoming a mother, choose to change a bit their target audience, focusing on their motherhood and women who are becoming a mother.

The research's question is based on "how the motherhood life is portrayed with the help of the social media influencers?" In the following pages, the whole subject will be researched in more detail, focusing on the motherhood life, on the grants that they are endorsing and about the ad disclosure. In the end, the results of the elaborated research will be widely detailed.

Introduction

The influencer marketing is properly based on influencers who are doing their work by promoting brands and encouraging their followers buying their products. Since some influencers out in the Romanian influencer market turned into mothers, their niche significantly changed from fashion or beauty – to baby or motherhood products.

An influencer is a prominent figure online (usually social media but also potentially on a blog). They've acquired a dedicated, highly engaged audience. Their followers trust their recommendations and are interested in their daily activities, the products they buy, the causes they support. All the mom influencers nowadays are earning a significant income from their personal brand and are often courted by international or national brands and organisations for collaborations. Where influencers differ from celebrity endorsements is that influencers (who aren't always celebrities in the traditional sense) are the ones to create and share original content that resonates well with the brands and their audience.

The current study focuses on some well-known Romanian influencers, such as Alina Ceuşan, Fabmuse Alina, or Ioana Grama. They managed to adapt their target audience into a mom-baby friendly one, but therefore not ignoring their main niche – the fashion and beauty one. From collaborating with fashion brands, their main concern now is promoting also products and services for new moms and their babies. Invariably, the mom influencers use their babies or children in their posts or stories as characters and co-opt them in sponsorship and other campaigns that help them gain money.

Chen (2013), in her critique of the term *mom influencer*, suggested that it is an ideological concept and one that is far from benign because it „reinforces women’s hegemonic normative roles as nurturers, thrusting women who blog about their children into a form of digital domesticity” (p. 511). Both terms are loaded, given conflicting societal expectations for women related to career and motherhood roles” (Duberley & Carrigan, 2013). In very recent times, the term mum blogger is now almost seen as ‘archaic’ and has been largely replaced with „social media influencer” (Wiley, 2018).

Forbes reportes on children who have built so-called „online empires” (O’Connor, 2017). Abidin (2015) has coined the term „micro-microcelebrity”, after Senft (2008, 2013) „microcelebrity”, to refer to the children of influencers where those children have themselves become online influencers. It has been argued that influencers (including mom influencers and others) are providing role models for „everyday” parents with their online behaviour, particularly, in relation to normalising the practice of sharing children’s behaviour and images (Leaver, 2017).

On the other hand, another significant difference between the “influencer mom” and the “regular mom” is the fact that they choose to post regularly on the social media platforms their babies and children and sometimes they give away tips and tricks for the “regular moms” who follow them for product recommendations and not only. They are paid for the ads for the products that they are promoting, and they are obliged to do the “ad disclosure” by posting relevant hashtags among the post.

When the content promotes particular products or services and contains a hyperlink or discount code, that means that the influencer gets paid for every “click-through” and this counts as advertising. It is necessary for them to “mark” the ad disclosure by just posting hashtags such as “#ad” or “#paidpromotion” and also by mentioning the brand. The main thing that they have to do is to make the brand *obvious*, so that the followers can have an easy access to it.

Methodology

The research took a qualitative approach, analysing all the mom influencers posts and stories in the past two months and comparing the results. The analysis was conducted over a period of 18 days, analysing all the Instagram posts and stories of 6 famous influencers, such as – Alina Ceuşan, Ioana Grama, Irina Deaconescu, Fabmuse Alina, Emily Burghilea or Gina Pistol. All the data was researched and inserted into a table. The main purpose of the research was to spot the difference between the mom-baby brands that they are promoting and the number of appearances of their child on their social media accounts. Many of them were promoting the same brands, as an example Alina Ceuşan with the brand *Monpetitjo.ro* or most of them with the brand *Adinish.com*. In their posts there wasn’t seen a hesitation of posting more content with their baby, which concludes in promoting more and more their image as “baby influencers.”

Analysing more deeply, these mom influencers gained more followers and appreciation since they had a baby, because people watch this kind of content with sympathy.

Results

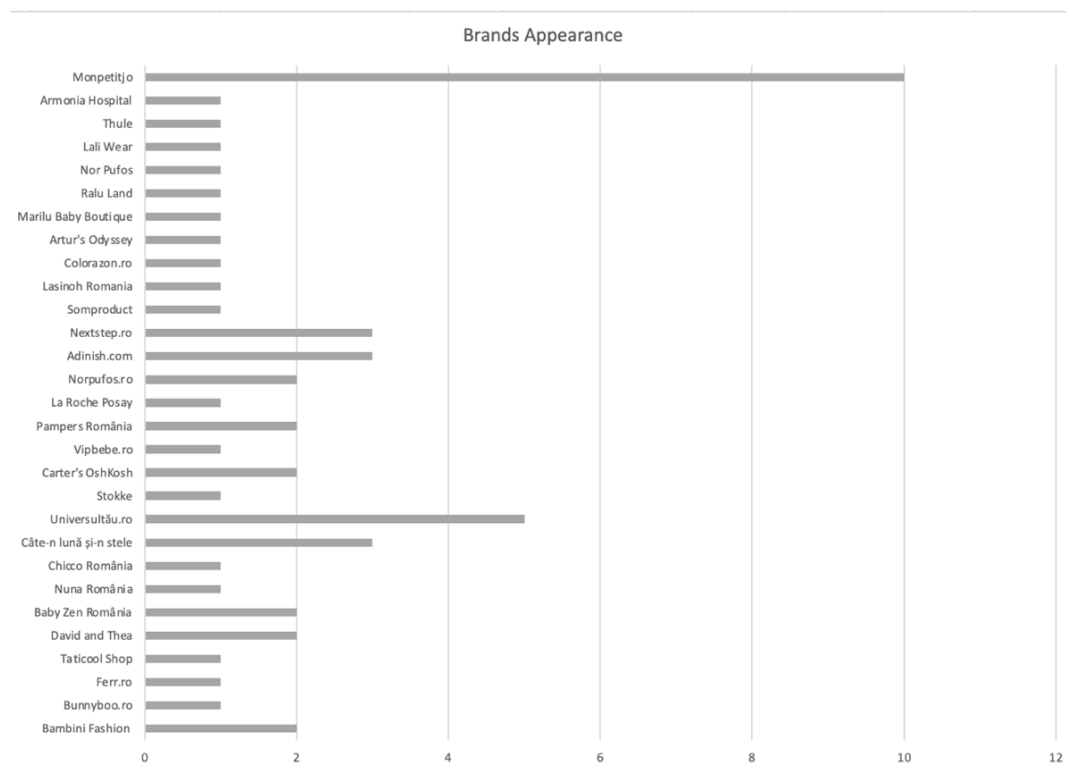
In the following lines, there will be shown the results of the analysis, depicted in a table.

Table 1. Content Analysis for mom influencers from Romania

Influencers	Brands	Stories/day	Mom/baby stories/day	Posts/day	Mom/baby posts	Baby appearance
Alina Ceușan	Bambini Fashion	27	10	2	1	7
	Bunnyboo.ro					
	Ferr.ro					
	Taticool Shop					
	Monpetitjo					
	David and Thea					
Irina Deaconescu	Baby Zen România	22	9	1	1	10
	Nuna România					
	Monpetitjo					
Emily Burghilea	Chicco România	16	6	1	1	8
	Câte-n lună și-n stele					
	Universultău.ro					
	Stokke					
	Carter's OshKosh					
	Vipbebe.ro					
Ioana Grama	Pampers România	28	7	1	1	7
	La Roche Posay					
Fabmuse Alina	Norpufos.ro	23	9	1	1	8
	Adinish.com					
	Nextstep.ro					
	Somproduct					
	Lasinoh Romania					
	Colorazon.ro					
	Câte-n lună și-n stele					
	Universultău.ro					
	Artur's Odyssey					
	Marilu Baby Boutique					
	Ralu Land					
	Nor Pufos					
	Lali Wear					
Ștefana Peev	Thule	22	13	1	1	6
	Armonia Hospital					
	Monpetitjo					

In the first table, it was held a detailed analysis of some of the famous mom-influencers from Romania and the brands that they are promoting, and also the number of appearances of their child on social media. It can be seen that some of them are “heavy-posters”, posting almost every day a mass of posts and stories on Instagram with their babies and promoting more mom-baby brands as the others.

In the chart below, we can observe the most used and advertised brands from mom influencers and as a result, brands such as *Monpetitjo* or *Universultău.ro* have more attention and they are more used by the mom influencers as other brands.

Figure 1. Chart depicting the usage of ad disclosure for brands

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the mom influencers are the perfect characters for portraying perfectly the motherhood life with or without their ups and downs. They are promoting brands that can be helpful for moms to be or for current mothers and their babies and have an

important role in the social media marketing and therefore in the influencer marketing. They also have an important role in informing the actual or future mothers about the motherhood living and their consequences. Also, the brands that they are promoting are really helpful for mothers and their babies. Their role in the society and in the social media industry is, in conclusion, really important.

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Chapter 3: ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Animated Commercials: Are They Mature Enough to Persuade Young Adult Consumers?

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The current study focused on animated commercials and on those that represent a combination of animated elements and real actors. This is a research theme with a quite poorly developed theoretical basis, which is why further research on it is clearly necessary. By using two research methods, the sociological survey and the content analysis, we tried to determine the preferences of young adult consumers, between the ages of 18 and 24, in terms of animated commercials, probing, at the same time, into the search for elements in a commercial, whether animated or not, that have some influence on their purchase intention. The sociological survey was carried out from March to April 2021, and it managed to gather 48 responses from students at the Babeş-Bolyai University. The content analysis was the second research method that came to complete the study. We used an analysis grid built on the basis of the criteria and the elements stated by the respondents in the sociological survey. Through the content analysis, we tried to assess the degree to which the 30 animated commercials analyzed meet the criteria and persuasive elements mentioned by the 48 respondents of the questionnaire. The study has shown that the consumer public consulted prefers commercials that are a combination of animation and real actors, briefly presenting the benefits of the product, the real opinion of some consumers, combining the informational and the artistic part. They want the commercials to have the right music, good graphics, well-chosen characters and to present the product in various ways. However, there are several factors in a commercial that contribute to the consumers' purchase choices, and an animated commercial does not offer the perfect recipe. Although the majority of the respondents stated in the sociological survey that they preferred animated commercials and commercials that combine both animated and real elements, rather than commercials containing only real actors, there is no undeniable evidence that consumers' preferences regarding the type of the commercial have any significant influence on the consumption behavior.

Introduction

Although animations have been created to be used in children's entertainment, in the 21st century advertisers get rid of the origins of them and, using state-of-the-art technologies, create animated commercials that are more far-reaching and detailed than a traditional commercial could ever be. And their choice to resort to animated commercials is justified: it was found „that animated ads among products of higher interest are more favorable both in terms of attention and understanding of the advertisement” (Rakrachakarn, Moschis, 2013, 138).

As far as the animations as an advertising design genre are concerned, they are „created by recording a series of still images – drawings, objects or people – in various positions of incremental movement” (Jin, 2011, 100). The core principle has remained the same, although, in over a decade, the technology has evolved and the ways of performing animations have reached unguessed heights. The technological evolution also had an impact on the role of animation in advertising

industry, as it significantly reduced the costs and the production time of animated commercials (Jin, 2011, 100).

While it is clear that the original purpose of animations was to attract children's attention, it is no less true that advertisements making use of this means of presentation have also come to reach another type of consumers in other age groups (Khalid, Yasmeen, Sajjad, 2016, 36). Thus, the present study was initiated in order to uncover the young consumers' preferences in terms of animated commercials, also aiming to find out if these commercials have any influence on the consumers' purchasing behavior regarding the promoted product or service.

The main theme of this study is linked to the efficiency of animated commercials among young consumers (aged between 18 and 24) and wishes to find out the main elements of a commercial that lead consumers to buy the promoted product. We also asked ourselves whether animated commercials influence consumer behavior to a greater extent compared to traditional-built advertisements. In addition to these aspects, it has also been considered whether animated commercials are intended exclusively for a much younger audience, such as children, because of the graphics and the colors they use. Another aspect that was taken into consideration when deciding to carry out this study was the fact that a variate range of studies that address the theme of animated commercials and their effects on purchase behavior is missing. The sources and the articles found focused heavily on print-type advertisements or on online advertisements that were vector-based and had added special effects to detect the main differences between original and animated advertising. Our study focuses on animated video advertisements that are either broadcasted on TV or on various social media platforms.

Methodology

We started this scientific research with the intention of finding answers to two research questions: What are the elements in an animated commercial that persuade consumers to purchase the product? Do animated advertisements have greater persuasion power than traditional advertisements in terms of the purchase intention?

We have also formulated two hypotheses that we have tried to verify using the two chosen research methods. First hypothesis: If the commercial is animated, then consumers will be more inclined to buy the promoted product.

Second hypothesis: The more a commercial has at least one animated element, the more attracted the consumers are to purchase the advertised product/service.

To find the answer to the two research questions and to verify the two hypotheses, we have applied two research methods: the sociological survey, and the content analysis, where we built a analysis grid based on the answers provided by the respondents to the questionnaire. The sociological survey was conducted in March 2021, with students from the Babeş-Bolyai University, aged 17 to 24. Of these, 75% are female and 25% are male. The majority (81,8%) come from an urban environment. For the selection of participants, we have made a non-probabilistic sampling of convenience.

The questionnaire was composed of 20 questions, in which we sought to determine the respondents' opinion on animated commercials, while trying to identify the elements of an animated or partially animated commercial that would persuade them to purchase the advertised product.

In the context of the content analysis, we analyzed 30 commercials, both animated and combined with real-world elements. The analysis grid was made up of 15 entries, which referred to persuasive elements identified by the population studied. With this method, we have tried to determine whether the commercials under analysis meet the criteria identified by the respondents and whether they are constructed in such a way as to induce the consumer to purchase the product.

Results

Out of the 20 questions included in the questionnaire, we decided to analyze the most relevant ones. Thus, 43.8% of the respondents prefer commercial that combine animated characters with real actors, while 39.6% prefer only animated commercials. Only 16.7% prefer commercials

that have only real actors. Also, the majority of respondents agree that animated commercials are intended for a wide audience, including children and young, elderly people, and no precise age is defined for this type of advertising.

When asked what are the elements that a commercial should contain in order for it to be persuasive, the majority of their responses focus on informational elements, which inform the consumer regarding the benefits of the product, its purpose and its necessity. Respondents want objective information, essential instructions for use; advertising should focus on the benefits of the product and present it as it is, through various statistics, views of other consumers or demonstrations. Using the content analysis, 30 animated commercials were analyzed in order to establish how many of them have the elements mentioned by the respondents. Out of 30 commercials, only 11 use a Call to Action to influence the consumer's purchase intention. However, almost all of them (28) made sure that the benefits of the promoted product are presented. None of them used statistics to highlight the relevance and the quality of the product or service.

Conclusion

At the end of this study, we have concluded that the consumers want a short and on-the-job commercial that arouses interest through the presentation mode, that is consistent, that presents the product and its benefits in an original way, with a story behind it, while using good graphics and the right music. However, even if the majority of the respondents stated in the sociological survey that they preferred animated commercials and commercials that combine both animated and real elements, there is no undeniable evidence that consumers' preferences regarding the type of the commercial have any significant influence on consumer behavior. There are several factors involved in the consumers' purchase intention, and the commercial being an animated one is not a decisive factor. None of the formulated hypotheses are validated through the results of this study, as they are not conclusive enough.

Regarding the limits of the current study, the relevance of the sample in the sociological survey should be mentioned, as well as the underdeveloped theoretical foundation.

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Kids and Cookies: A Study on Featuring Children in Emotionally-Effective Advertising

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Kids, animals and sex sell. This is why more and more commercials use this golden rule of advertising (Cosoi, 2001: 473). The aim of this paper is to explore the effects that featuring children in commercials have on certain buying behaviours and emotional attachment towards a brand. For this, the experiment method is used: two groups of subjects, two sets of Oreo video commercials (one of which includes kids) and scales that are meant to explore 3 main parameters: subjects' emotional state, attachment to the product and intention of buying. Following the research, it can be concluded that the presence of children in advertising significantly increases the probability of purchasing certain goods, especially in those who are part of Generation Z.

1. Introduction

Emotion owns a privileged place in the fields of marketing and advertising, thanks to its power of building brand loyalty and brand attachment (Hwang, Kandampully, 2012; 98 *apud* Yu, Dean, 2001: 234). These elements have positive effects on corporate image and profit: the consumer promotes the brand (by word of mouth), is more immune to external negative opinions about the brand, but also more tolerant when certain ethical rules are violated (Japutra, Ekinici, Simkin, 2018). Children seem to be some sort of a stimulus that generates likeability and emotional response in consumers, which is why this paper intends to study this phenomenon thoroughly, given the fact that commercials featuring children and tweens tend to multiply nowadays among Romanian advertising campaigns (Cosoi, 2001: 473). The credibility these emitters obtain through their innocence helps them easily access the human affective side and send certain values that ensure balance at a societal level (Kinsey, 1987: 169), while also generating awareness and consideration towards a brand (Cosoi, 2001, 473).

Studies show that “by associating a brand with an attractive cue/stimulus, advertisers can favorably influence consumers’ attitudes, even if the stimulus does not relate to the product and provides no product information” (Kim, Lim, Bhargava, 1998 *apud* Lancendorfer, Atkin, Reece, 2008: 384). This particular issue is highlighted by Carmen Maria Cosoi, in a content analysis she applies on Romanian commercials. She discovers that the amount of commercials for kids’ products in which kids also play is considerably smaller (22%) compared to those for which they are not the main decision factor (78%). Thus, no wonder kids are often associated with products such as detergents, insurances, banking services or mobile telephony services. However, the field that features children the most remains sweets (Cosoi, 2001: 474).

The study approaches the effects just mentioned on Generation Z or “Digital Natives”, “GenTech” or “Post Millennials” (Dolot, 2018: 45), which holds under its umbrella people born between 1995-2012. However, the sample explored in this study includes only people aged 15-26 because until 14 “children may be unable to activate the cognitive defences required to withstand advertising effects” (John, 1999, 42 *apud* Pettigrew et al., 2013: 2205). Generation Z members are considered to have the highest consumption power and by 2020 they were forecast to be the largest consumer group globally (Bachem, 2); this is why it is worth observing, testing and monitoring their consumption attitudes and behaviours.

Having all this in mind, understanding the connection between kids acting in commercials and brand attachment (via emotional stimulation) represents a key-aspect that will provide valuable information on how to better apply this strategy. Moreover, other studies have explored this effect on kids or their parents; age segments different from the ones treated in this paper, on markets that are different from Romania, from a cultural, social and economic point of view.

2. Methodology

Considering all the aspects discussed in the previous section, two hypotheses are outlined:

H1. The presence of children in advertisements increases the emotional attachment to the brand in young people aged between 15 and 26.

H2. The presence of children in advertisements increases the intention of buying among young people aged between 15 and 26.

To test the hypotheses, the experiment method is used, performed on a population of 40 individuals, divided into two numerically equal groups, similar in terms of demographics (see annex 1). The experiment takes place online and lasts for 15 minutes. Each group is given a set of two videocommercials for Oreo biscuits. The first group of subjects (experimental) watches commercials in which children play, while the other group (control) watches an advertisement with an adult and one without a human component, in which only the product is presented. After watching the ads, the subjects are given three scales, inspired from the literature and adapted, which they must complete in order to measure the modification of the dependent variables, following the action of the independent variable. The first scale (Pleasure, Arousal, Dominance) measures the emotional state of the subjects through six items corresponding to the Pleasure dimension (Mehrabian, Russell, 1974). The next scale measures the attachment to the product (Schifferstein, Zwartkruis-Pelgrim, 2008), while the last one focuses on buying intention (Duffett, 2015). The sampling is non-probabilistic, and the results do not meet external validity.

Results show that a) there is a strong correlation between children and emotional attachment to Oreo and b) commercials not featuring children are less likely to trigger the need of Oreo biscuits consumption. First and foremost, the data obtained from the Pleasure, Arousal, Dominance scale shows that the first group (experimental) has a more positive emotional state after watching the Oreo commercials (see annex 2). The control group (watching advertisements without children) gives more neutral answers (“Neither satisfied or unsatisfied” -8, “Neither unhappy or happy” -9) or even negative answers (“A little bit pessimistic” -3, “Very bored”, “Bored”, “A little bit bored” -3) compared to the experimental group, which gives more positive results (“Very happy” -5, “Very pleased” -11, “Satisfied” -7, “Contented” -10 etc).

In the same manner, the second scale shows that the first group (experimental) feels emotionally connected to Oreo after watching the commercials, compared to the control group which, again, tends to give neutral, elusive answers (“I feel emotionally connected with this product” - <Agree>, <Definitely agree> - 15 answers for the experimental group and only 7 for the control group). Moreover, data shows that the first set of commercials (including children) generates more positive answers for the irreplaceability factor, compared to the data obtained from the control group (17 and 9 positive answers, respectively). Also, the emotional factor (“This product holds a special place in my life”) is significantly more present among subjects from the experimental group, who give 12 positive answers, compared to those from the control group, who give no such answers (see annex 3).

Last but not least, the third scale clearly shows that commercials featuring kids are more efficient in stimulating the intent of buying (see annex 4). The first (experimental) group gives a majority of positive answers (80%) when asked if Oreo commercials have any positive influence on their buying intent, while the second group (control) only gives 35% of such answers.

That being said, the hypotheses of this study are clearly proven. First of all, it can be concluded that the experimental group feels more emotionally connected to Oreo after watching commercials including kids; this point testifies the fact that emotion is a factor that should not be ignored when building an advertising campaign. In addition, the second hypothesis, proven especially by the data

obtained with the third scale used in this study, highlights the importance of kids' presence in positively influencing the intention of buying. It seems that featuring children in commercials definitely creates some form of need of consumption which, in the end, leads to buying behaviours. These behaviours are the ones that advertising campaigns eagerly seek for by using intelligent strategies, and featuring children may be one of those simple, yet effective strategies.

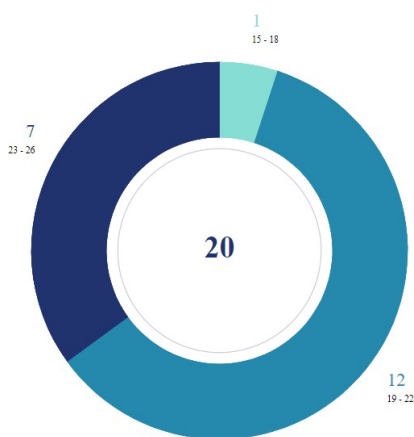
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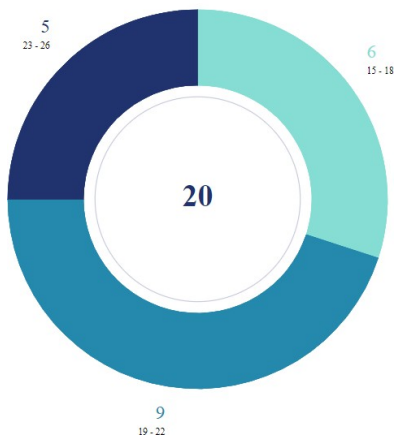
Appendixes

Annex 1

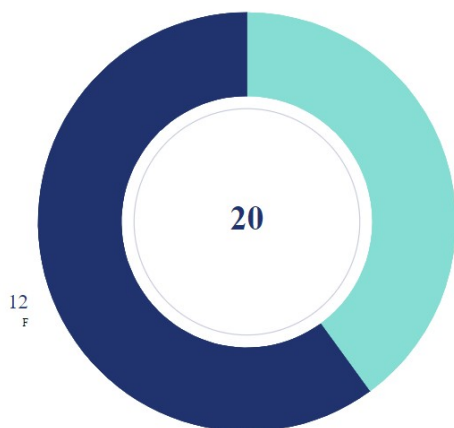
Age (experimental group)



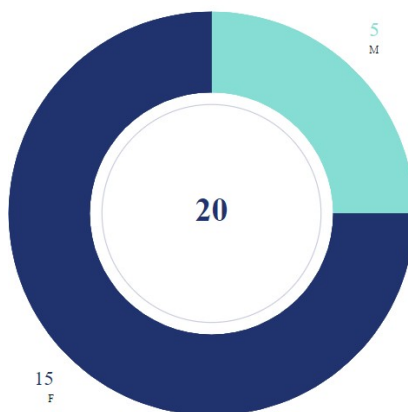
Age (control group)



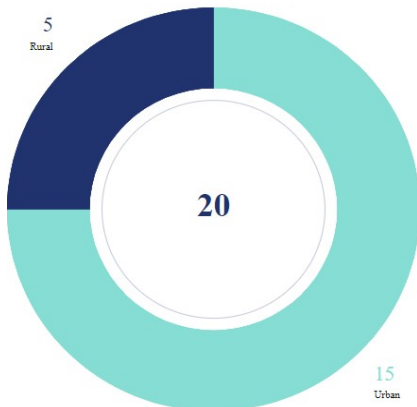
Gender (experimental group)



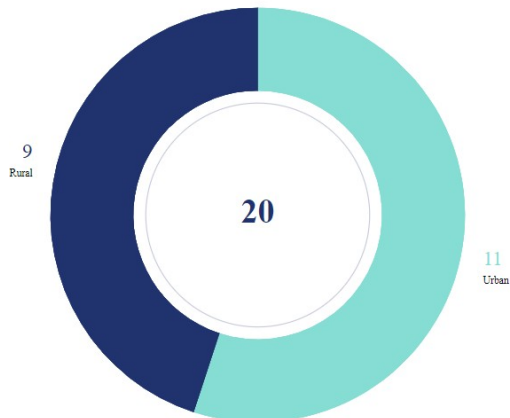
Gender (control group)



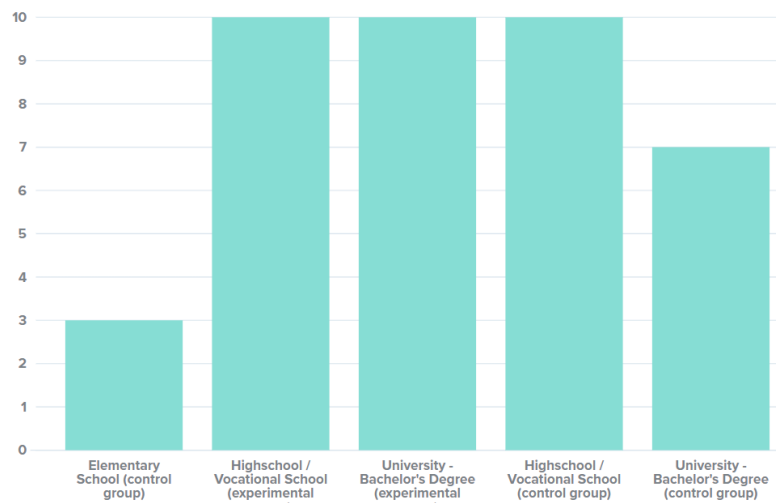
Origin (experimental group)



Origin (control group)



Education



Annex 2

PLEASURE – AROUSAL- DOMINANCE (experimental group)						
Foarte nefericit	Nefericit	Puțin nefericit	Nici nefericit, nici fericit	Puțin fericit	Fericit	Foarte fericit
0	0	0	2	4	9	5
Foarte iritat	Iritat	Puțin iritat	Nici iritat, nici încântat	Puțin încântat	Încântat	Foarte încântat
0	0	0	1	4	11	4
Foarte nesatisfăcut	Nesatisfăcut	Puțin nesatisfăcut	Nici nesatisfăcut, nici satisfăcut	Puțin satisfăcut	Satisfăcut	Foarte satisfăcut
0	0	0	1	3	13	3
Foarte melancolic	Melancolic	Puțin melancolic	Nici melancolic, nici bine dispus	Puțin bine dispus	Bine dispus	Foarte bine dispus
1	1	2	1	4	10	3
Foarte pesimist	Pesimist	Puțin pesimst	Nici pesimst, nici optimist	Puțin optimist	Optimist	Foarte optimist
0	0	0	2	3	14	1
Foarte plictisit	Plictisit	Puțin plictisit	Nici plictisit, nici amuzat	Puțin amuzat	Amuzat	Foarte amuzat
0	0	0	0	4	15	1

PLEASURE – AROUSAL – DOMINANCE (control group)						
Foarte nefericit	Nefericit	Puțin nefericit	Nici nefericit, nici fericit	Puțin fericit	Fericit	Foarte fericit
0	0	0	9	8	2	1
Foarte iritat	Iritat	Puțin iritat	Nici iritat, nici încântat	Puțin încântat	Încântat	Foarte încântat
1	0	1	6	8	4	0
Foarte nesatisfăcut	Nesatisfăcut	Puțin nesatisfăcut	Nici nesatisfăcut, nici satisfăcut	Puțin satisfăcut	Satisfăcut	Foarte satisfăcut
0	0	1	8	4	7	0
Foarte melancolic	Melancolic	Puțin melancolic	Nici melancolic, nici bine dispus	Puțin bine dispus	Bine dispus	Foarte bine dispus
0	0	1	7	2	10	0
Foarte pesimist	Pesimist	Puțin pesimst	Nici pesimst, nici optimist	Puțin optimist	Optimist	Foarte optimist
0	0	3	7	4	6	0
Foarte plictisit	Plictisit	Puțin plictisit	Nici plictisit, nici amuzat	Puțin amuzat	Amuzat	Foarte amuzat
1	1	1	6	9	1	1

Annex 3

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT														
	Dezacord total		Dezacord		Dezacord parțial		Nici dezacord, nici acord		Acord parțial		Acord		Acord total	
	KID	CTR	KID	CTR	KID	CTR	KID	CTR	KID	CTR	KID	CTR	KID	CTR
Mă simt conectat emoțional cu acest produs	0	0	0	6	1	1	2	6	2	4	8	2	7	0
Acest produs îmi este drag	0	1	1	3	0	4	1	3	2	3	4	7	12	2
Acest produs nu are nicio însemnătate specială pentru mine	4	2	7	1	2	4	2	6	1	5	3	1	1	1
Sunt foarte atașat de acest produs	1	2	1	5	1	5	5	6	3	0	4	2	5	0
Acest produs are un rol special în viața mea	1	4	1	7	2	2	4	7	3	0	5	0	4	0
Nu am niciun sentiment față de acest produs	6	0	3	3	4	3	1	5	2	4	3	3	1	2
Un produs asemănător cu biscuiții Oreo nu i-ar putea înlocui	0	2	1	4	0	3	2	2	3	6	12	2	2	1
Alt produs asemănător cu biscuiții Oreo are aceeași însemnătate pentru mine	3	0	9	4	1	10	0	3	1	0	6	3	0	2

*KID – experimental group

*CTR – control group

Annex 4

BUYING INTENTION						
	Da		Nu		Nu știu	
	KID	CTR	KID	CTR	KID	CTR
Înționez să cumpăr biscuiți Oreo în viitorul apropiat	15	12	3	7	2	1
Îmi doresc să consum biscuiți Oreo în urma vizionării spoturilor	17	12	3	8	0	1
Reclamele de la Oreo au o influență pozitivă asupra deciziei mele de cumpărare	16	7	3	10	1	3
Este posibil să cumpăr biscuiți Oreo în viitorul apropiat	17	14	1	3	3	0
Reclamele anterioare m-au făcut să nu vreau să consum biscuiți Oreo	14	7	6	13	0	0
Aș recomanda biscuiții Oreo altor persoane	15	14	1	3	4	3

*KID – experimental group

*CTR – control group

Emotions and Creativity in Graphic Design.

An Analysis on the Minimalism Efficiency in Print Ads

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Introduction

The role of modern advertising is far more complex now than it has ever been before. It is of great importance to understand what differentiate mediocre advertising content from the qualitative one and moreover, what establish effectiveness. There have always been things that work just well for one industry but do not properly function for another. The present study investigates how certain elements of a print ad influence the quality and the efficacy of the ad per se.

Research findings show that there are some specific aspects that tend to accompany a successful print ad. Therefore, a pattern has been elaborated that contain elements and motives that lead to success in terms of advertising effectiveness. This includes concepts such as simplicity, creativity and sensitivity. The need for creative and innovative ideas has never been so great as for now. The fact that individuals live in a society where everything that could have been done, it has been done at least twice already should be an incentive to encourage the use of creative thinking and all the perks it has to offer to this volatile industry (Heath & Heath, 2007).

More than 30 years ago, Madden and Weinberger (1982) proposed that advertisers and their firms were actively seeking for factors that separated outstanding advertising material from ordinary or marginal advertising. Many innovative and inventive promotional techniques and approaches have emerged since then. Many of these components were approved or refused. However, no specific or universal solution has yet been identified (Pileliene & Grigaliunaite, 2016). Literature shows through various experiments how visual stimuli seem to be more memorable than textual stimuli. Social acceptance signals expressed in print ads found both in visual and textual media may have a strong positive impact on consumers' brand assessment and purchasing intention. Visual social approval cues were discovered to be more important than verbal social approval cues (Myers & Sar, 2013).

This study comprises a methodological component: a content analysis and an experiment, in order to reach a conclusion in this topic. A number of three research questions have been established for each method. For the content analysis: 1) How does minimalism materialize in the print ads of some of the most powerful brands? 2) Are there minimalism patterns differences between prints ads belonging to different product categories? 3) To what degree can we link the presence of minimalism to creativity in print ads?

And as for the experiment: 1) Does minimalism in print ad design create a more significant impact towards the consumer, in comparison with a cluttered one? 2) To what degree do consumers perceive minimalist ads as being more creative? 3) Do minimalist ads increase the emotional attachment of the consumers?

Methodology

The primary goal of this study is to emphasize the significance of a minimalist approach to print ad graphic design. The continual desire for new and original content has left a sour taste in the advertising business. Many relevant studies and research have demonstrated that, while creativity always works, there has yet to be identified a precise "recipe" for obtaining it in various fields, including advertising. The methodological part of this study, on the other hand, seeks to demonstrate that a minimalist approach in print advertisements is both creative and has a significant influence on consumers.

Based on the literature review, an analysis grid tailored to the objective of the research has been developed. A total of forty-five prints were chosen from five different categories. Three similar brands were picked for each category, followed by three print ads for each chosen brand. Following that, each print ad was run through the analysis grid and assessed using the reference criteria. Due to the unfortunate setting of the pandemic, the experiment was carried out in an online environment. There are two groups: a control group and an experimental group. Each group comprised of thirty individuals ranging in age from 20 to 30 years old. To demonstrate the validity of the study questions and the literature evaluation, each group was given a distinct stimulus.

Results

In the case of content analysis, there are several patterns that can provide answers to concerns about the materialisation of minimalism in print advertisements. The great majority of print advertisements make use of a lot of negative space in colors that aren't distracting to the eye and, more importantly, do not really divert attention away from the ad's main point of interest. This focus of interest, which is generally defined by a maximum of two components, is positioned in the center of the picture. The parts of a print advertisement are seldom abstract, and they are generally formed by familiar ideas or concepts. Moreover, a minimalist print ad leaves the public wanting more.

The experiment's findings also support the effectiveness of minimalist print advertisements and their link to creativity. If participants in the control group thought their print was adequate to average, those in the control group who were shown a minimalist version of the identical print ad as previously had a completely different impression. The great majority of responders stated that the print is of high quality, unique, impactful, and creative.

Conclusion

These findings not only answer all the research questions posed at the start of the study, but they also support the initial assumptions regarding the effectiveness of minimalism in print advertisements. Consequently, based on the interpretation of the results and prior talks, it is possible to conclude that the study also confirms the two research hypotheses, as:

H1: A minimalist design is perceived as being more creative (original, artistic and flexible), in comparison with a non-minimalist one.

H2: A minimalist design does make a print ad more efficient in terms of emotional impact elicited by consumers.

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The Impact of Guerrilla Marketing on the Consumer

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Advertising plays a key role in modern life and is the most important communication tool in promoting products or services. In today's society, marketers cannot convey to buyers any information, or message about their product or services without advertising. In this way, alternative marketing, such as guerrilla marketing, appears as a new way to improve awareness. This type of marketing is characterized by creativity, emotional involvement, innovation and the unexpected, elements that have a much greater impact on consumers as opposed to a television commercial.

The purpose of the study is to measure the impact of guerilla marketing on consumer behavior, to the impact of traditional advertising. This research presents an experiment on 30 second-year students from the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Communication and Public Relations, and Advertising, with an average age of 21 years. We made two groups of 15 people, the first group was exposed to a traditional ad, and the second group was exposed to guerrilla action. The research results show that guerrilla marketing has a much more positive impact than traditional marketing on increasing brand awareness, changing consumer behavior and changing brand attitudes.

Introduction

Traditional advertising "has become easy to ignore because consumers have learned to avoid advertising where it was expected to appear." (Abbasi et al., 2009) Therefore, marketers have found new unconventional ways to promote their successful brand / products or services; one of them being Guerilla Marketing. Guerrilla marketing is an alternative type of advertising that focuses on low-cost marketing tactics and offers unconventional results. The key to guerrilla marketing surprises the consumer with a high level of creativity and tries to create certain emotions for consumers (Dagorn, 2015).

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of guerrilla marketing on consumer behavior. The approached topic has a great relevance in the field of marketing and advertising, because it can show the success rate of a new marketing method, which could replace the traditional methods. In developing the topic, we try to find the answer to the following research questions, which are the basis of our study: Are people more receptive to guerrilla advertising than traditional ones? / Guerrilla ads have a greater impact on online and offline than traditional advertising / How does guerrilla marketing affect consumer behavior? / Does guerrilla marketing influence the attitude of consumers towards the brand?

Consumer motivation does not depend only on the rational factor. Reaching customer emotions allows the brand to have an advantage over their competitors' and emotions can directly affect buying attitudes (Dagorn, 2015). One of the main advantages of guerrilla marketing is the element of surprise. It can surprise potential consumers in an unexpected place and this creates an instant emotional reaction, such as shock, amazement, laughter or sadness (Abbasi et al., 2009). In Guerrilla marketing research - to investigate the effectiveness of guerrilla marketing in the urban environment for the Generation X relative to Generation Y, study respondents state that "If the guerrilla marketing campaign is smart, unusual, and creates a huge surprise, I want to learn more about this brand" (Dagorn, 2015). The Word-of-mouth effect is one of the most powerful marketing methods that specialists try to create on their brand.

Methodology

The main hypotheses from which the research starts are the following: H1 - If a brand uses guerrilla marketing as a way of promotion, then it will manage to increase its notoriety more strongly, quickly and positively, than those that use traditional advertising; H2 - If a brand will use guerrilla marketing instead of traditional advertising, then the buying behavior of the consumer will change positively towards the product; H3 - If a brand uses guerrilla marketing as a method of promotion, then consumers will develop a more positive attitude towards of that brand.

The research method chosen is the experiment, the dependent variable is the type of traditional and guerrilla advertising measured over the independent one - people's consumer behavior. The chosen marketing strategies belong to the Nestle brand, more precisely to the Kit Kat product. The tool used in the experiment is the online questionnaire. The target group of this experiment was represented by 30 second-year students from the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, sections "Communication and Public Relations" and Advertising ", aged between 20 and 21 years. We divided the subjects into two experimental groups of 15 individuals each and designed two questionnaires with 32 questions to measure the impact of ad types on consumer perception and behavior. One group (1) was exposed to a traditional advertising ad, and the second group (2) was exposed to guerrilla marketing advertising. These questionnaires were created on 27.04.2021, the respondents having time to complete 4 hours.

Results

The main results found after applying the experiment on the two groups are that: guerrilla marketing is more appreciated by respondents than the traditional one, because through it, the brand offers a direct and personal experience to the consumer; Experimental group 2 is more likely to give confidence to the brand / product presented by guerrilla marketing, unlike group 1. When asked about changing consumer behavior on the product presented, group I showed an undecided attitude, unlike group 2 where the general attitude was positive, namely in favor of purchasing the product following the guerrilla marketing action. Following the evaluation of the answers, we found that only guerrilla marketing determines the appearance of the Word to Mouth effect that helps to increase awareness. Another relevant aspect is the fact that Guerilla Marketing determines the spontaneous appearance of strong feelings to the consumers, which determines them to form a more positive attitude towards the brand.

Conclusion

Through this research we wanted to see the difference between traditional and guerrilla marketing strategies on consumer behavior and attitude. Based on this paper, we have concluded that guerrilla advertising has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. All hypotheses of the study were confirmed. Guerrilla marketing, unlike the traditional one, determines the word to mouth effect which helps considerably to increase the notoriety and at the same time the trust in the brand and their products / services. In terms of behavioral changes, it is not possible to measure the exact momentary impact of these marketing strategies, but group 2 showed more positive long-term buying attitudes. Research statistics show that unconventional marketing manages to provoke more and stronger positive emotional states, as opposed to the traditional print that most individuals are already accustomed to and ignore. Another important element here is providing a personal consumer experience with the brand, being directly involved and developing the feeling that he, as a potential consumer, is important for that brand.

Limits of the research

The limits of our research are: the choice of a small, unrepresentative sample, which determines that the entire research is unrepresentative. For future research, we should approach this topic on a much larger scale, to be able to capture consumers in the field to record changes in behavior or their reactions to these advertising strategies to provide greater accuracy of results.

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The Impact of YouTube Ads on Young Romanian People in 2020

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The paper covers the impact of YouTube advertisements on Romanian young people in 2020. From the research, we have studied and observed the attitude of the target group on YouTube advertisements. The data was obtained using two research methods: the sociological survey, using the questionnaire, and the content analysis, with the analysis grid. The target group consists of young people aged between 18 and 25, from Romania. The study participants were chosen using the non-probabilistic and convenience sampling process, with a total number of 316 people, 83.5% female and 14.6% male. Through the content analysis, we collected relevant information about 23 advertisements, some of which were extracted from the questionnaire replies. According to the results, the vast majority shows hostility toward YouTube advertisements, which provoke feelings of irritation, repulsion and even anger.

Introduction

The subject of this study is the impact of advertisements on a selected target group. This study aims to identify the factors that influence people in the target group, but also the impact that the ads have on them in the context of advertising on YouTube. According to official YouTube statistics, there are 1.9 billion global users, more than 24.000 hours of video is uploaded every hour and 7 billion hours of video is viewed per week (YouTube Statistics, 2012). These statistics also attracted possibilities of being quantified in money: advertisers are increasingly interested in this platform and in the functionalities it offers. There are currently no known studies on this topic, addressing this section of the population.

In this context, the present paper could provide very useful, new information on the behavior of the population online and the mutual impact. In order to obtain new information about the situation in Romania, we used the following research questions to consider during the study:

Q1: How do YouTube ads influence young people age 18 to 25 in Romania in 2020?

Q2: What are the factors that influence the interest in advertising?

The fact that the frequency of advertising has increased lately is a topic of interest that can be studied more in depth.

Methodology

We formulated four relevant hypotheses, which were expected to be confirmed by the results:

H1: Most people in the target group are very irritated by YouTube ads.

H2: The more ads appear, the higher the irritation level is.

H3: If the person can skip the ad, they will do so.

H4: The people in the target group think that the ads are persuasive in a negative way or have false/erroneous information.

Two research methods were used to obtain the necessary information for the study: sociological survey, using the questionnaire as a research tool, and content analysis, using the analysis grid as the tool. The chosen target group consists of young people from Romania, between the ages of 18 and 25, who use the YouTube platform. We selected the participants in the study by sampling. The sampling was non-probabilistic, on the basis of convenience, on a finite, unspecified, tangible population. Considering that we have opted to study young people from all over Romania, the sampling was national.

The questionnaire had 34 questions, of which the last ones were socio-demographic questions recording age, gender, environment and the county of provenance. The rest of the questions were on the subject of the research.

Through the second method of research, content analysis, we gathered information about video ads. We analyzed 23 ads and gathered information such as the length of the videos, the brand or product being promoted, the concept and messages issued. Some of the headings in the analysis grid are: the year when the ad appeared, duration, brand promoted, number of characters appearing, message transmitted (directly or subtle) or type of music / jingle.

Results

Both research methods that we used returned very valuable information for our study, which we will briefly present below. The questionnaire offered us information about YouTube users' behavior, in the context of ad appearance, and about their impact. We had a number of 316 people who have answered it, of which 83.5% were female, and 14.6% male. We have had participants from all the counties in Romania and of all target group ages.

Most of the respondents use YouTube daily (87%), and 11.7% uses it a few times a week. The device that is used the most for watching videos on this platform is the smartphone (78.8%), followed by the PC (13.3%) and the Smart TV (6%). As for the characteristics that play a role in choosing a video to watch, the category of the content turned out to be the most important, followed by its creators and the people who appear in the video.

In 66.1% of the cases, the ads on YouTube are not relevant to the video they appear on. Most often, the ads are skippable (57%). However, 36.1% of the ads are not skippable, and ads made by influencers are most rarely encountered (3.5%).

Most of our participants watch these ads very rarely or not at all. If they do watch them, the most important contributing factors are the ad music and the product. Only 3.8% say that they have actually bought something after they saw it advertised on YouTube.

The content analysis that we made helped us in better understanding the brands' preferences when it comes to video ads (like the duration, number of people, dialogue, aesthetics), and the use of elements specific to branding (as the appearance of the brand name, logo, jingle). We have analyzed 23 YouTube ads. Over half of the brands opted for short ads (30 to 60 seconds). The ads that used celebrity endorsement, however, were longer, and use a vlog format, a review format or something similar. Also, most of the brands display the benefits that their products will offer, usually inserting a subtle message too. None of the ads resorted to transmitting feelings of sadness: all of them illustrated, through the characters, plot and music, positive feelings, like joy, energy and freedom.

Conclusion

After studying our results, we have come to a series of conclusions. Even though YouTube uses a data-analysis algorithm in order to personalize the ads users see, most of them do not encounter ads that are relevant for them. Most of the respondents think that YouTube ads should disappear, because they are "annoying" and a "waste of time". The fact that most brands opt for short ads, suggest that they are aware of this and try to capture the audience's attention as fast as possible, to make them more efficient.

The first three hypotheses were confirmed, and the fourth one was partially confirmed. Most people in our target group are, indeed, very irritated by the appearance of the ads, and the bigger their number is, the greater is the irritation. Almost all our participants admitted that they skip the ads as soon as possible. The fourth hypothesis regarded the persuasive nature of the ads, and more than half of the participants think that persuasion is used in a negative way.

Energetic music is used the most by brands because they are conscious of its role in the audience retention. And while most people said that they don't like ads made by influencers, a big part of them also admitted that these ads influence their purchase intention the most.

Almost 200 people offered an example of ad they had seen recently, which shows that even though they cause negative feelings, they are efficient in transmitting some essential brand identity elements, which is a good thing for the brands.

Both the social survey results and the content analysis show that young people in Romania feel annoyed and repulsed when ads appear. Ads that have 30 seconds or less and the ones in which there is at least one person are easier to tolerate.

One of the limitations found in this study is that the questionnaire did not reach enough men. This would have avoided the excessive gender gap between respondents.

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How the Presentation of a Product Can Influence the Decision-Making Process of the Consumer

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The current study has been based on the idea that an individual may be influenced in relation to the decision to purchase a product, when another person who sells the product is involved in the process. For this paper we used the experiment as a method, with the questionnaire as a tool. We have carried out two series of questionnaires that we have distributed online to two different groups of students. The questionnaires covered the same questions and the difference between them is that we inserted two different videos. The videos have the same text, scenario, and person trying to sell. One presents an advertisement where the person involved displays a friendly attitude and has a nice physical look, while the other has the opposite, that is, a bored attitude and a severe aspect. During the course of the research we discovered that advertising does not dislike, and the subjects known the elements they would like to find in a product. Their decision to recommend and finally buy the product, as well as to recommend the commercial, is influenced by the way the person presented the product.

Introduction

The attitude toward advertising relates to the behavior of the public to towards advertising which can be represented by the favorable or unfavorable reaction of consumers towards a certain advertisement. This reaction refers to their thoughts and feelings which will later influence their attitude towards advertising.

In advertising, you opt to use a person because it is much easier for the consumer to associate with the product if he sees someone else doing it. Using a celebrity increases the attractiveness of the brand and product. A celebrity thus influences some of the criteria by which a consumer chooses to purchase a particular product. But using a celebrity can also be a risk because it can create controversy, caused by personal life, which can gradually lead to different brand-related scandals. Therefore, non-known people are used precisely to avoid creating negative advertising. These unknown people are chosen by brands based on the demographics of the existing target market, as an alternative, companies can create their own people to control the links between product and consumers (Tanjung, 2016, 232). This person has the role of infusing, of providing a model for the purchase of a product or service. Non-celebrities are used to nullify the negativity of celebrities. It is shown that they create a more favorable image than advertising, brand, and purchase intention compared to someone famous (Saeed, 2014, 53).

Endorsement is used to draw attention to a product. The person used as an endorser transfers his characteristics to the product, and consumers, if they relate to these characteristics will be more tempted to purchase the product (Tanjung, 2016, 232). That's why celebrities or non-celebrities, created by companies, are used to influence and give consumers the impression that they can resonate with the person promoting the product.

Acceptability comes with preference. Preference is one of the principles of influence. People prefer to respond positively to a request that comes from a person they know or like (Iancu, 2016, 126). We prefer a person depending on the physical appearance, the similarities we have with him, both physically and behaviorally, depending on what compliments we receive, the connections we create with that person. All these features are carefully studied and used in advertising to influence consumer behavior.

Authority is another principle that influences our choices as consumers. It is not a real authority that should be used, but only an apparent one precisely to attract the attention of the one who sees the advertisement (Iancu, 2016, 126). People with a certain title in society, actors, specialists, etc. are used, and the clothing they wear is also very important. We associate more with people who have the same style as ours, but we obey those who are formally dressed, those who wear uniforms. Those who wear a suit are those who impose respect, trust, seriousness and we tend to obey because it is an “authority” (Cialdini, 2008, 131-133). Like clothes, accessories can also influence us, whether we are talking about jewelry, whether we are talking about cars and other machinery.

Methodology

Our experiment concerned the preference of buying a product when the product is presented by a pleasant and a less pleasant person, both behavioral and physical. The hypotheses and research questions we formulated were:

H1: If the seller displays a pleasant behavior, then the consumer will be influenced to buy it.

H2: If a person's sale of a product takes place in an unpleasant manner, then the consumer will perceive the product as poor quality.

Q1: What influence does the seller have on the decision-making process of the consumer?

Q2: What is the attitude of the consumer when the product is presented in a pleasant or unpleasant manner?

Two series of questionnaires were distributed online on Facebook, to two groups of different students. They contain the same series of questions, scenario and product but the difference between them is the videos. The same girl plays a role in an advertising where she wants to sell a product but shows two conflicting attitudes: in the first video (V1) she is dressed casual, is optimistic about the product and has the power of persuasion, while in the second video (V2) she is dressed in a suit, presents the product with disinterest and the chances of conviction are low. Both questionnaires consisted of 17 closed questions. First section targeted the vision of the subjects on advertising, if an ad can persuade them to purchase a product and if they ask for opinion before buying. The second section targeted the most important elements in an ad and characteristic of a product. In the last section we included the two videos with questions about them. To build the answers of some questions we used for questions number 2¹, 5², 6³, 7⁴, 8⁵ scales taken from other studies.

Results

The respondents of both variants of questionnaires start from the same point: they like the idea of advertising, aware of the most important elements of an ad and as well as the essential characteristics of a product. Although the seller may have more information about the product, the individual chooses the opinion of a close person, of someone who has proved to know him.

¹ https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/236295957.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2uSj3Qri3J0XLER0EOgb4UUxSfjhVNI_5YKcWTsY3dtgoRH1FdbFIUJKI

² https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296320306445?fbclid=IwAR30_GBiscCH3NKfVKz-taA0P8sWtwbghvWYiRY1ygC-Gd9Q7naaq6awImQ#sec3

³ https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Importance-of-various-product-attributes-in-the-purchase-decision-for-food_fig2_322234189

⁴ https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Scale-Used-to-Measure-Attitude-toward-Advertising_tbl1_303750568

⁵ <http://www.ijdesign.org/index.php/IJDesign/article/view/365/166?fbclid=IwAR26SFADI4s-e5AH7X1zlQJ76lQpjJ0sOzPYztOWLaOGIAKr8j6zfbRjJ5I>

Subjects' responses began to differ when they watched the video inserted in the received questionnaire. Non-verbal language, such as tone and attitude in the first video, led respondents to consider it as largely attractive, informative, convincing and pleasant. The second video was found to be more non-informative, although the same text was used. The other answers were also negative. In case of emotions the video triggered all respondents were neutral and relaxed. But those who watched V2 felt more disturbed and bored than others. Although no member of the first group knows the product brand the vast majority claimed that they are willing to purchase it. While in the second group there are fewer people who would buy it. In V1 although the product did not convince the subjects to recommend it to several people, they prefer to recommend the ad. In V2, the opposite answers to the first indicate that the subjects would be willing to give the product a chance, but because of the impression that the person in the video created, the ad is not worth being recommended.

Conclusion

From the results presented, it can be observed that in addition to product characteristics and visual elements of advertising, when the product is presented by a person the attitude of the individual toward the product changes depending on person's behavior. The decision-making process is thus influenced by the way the person interacts with the consumer. If the attitude that the seller takes it's more pleasant the individual will tilt to purchase it. This claim also applies vice versa when the attitude is unpleasant, the customer will not want the product. At present it is not enough for advertising to consist only of the picture of the product. The impact will increase as the product is displayed next to a well-known personality, which we appreciate or have a positive opinion of. There is no need to involve a celebrity as long as the one that sell ends up winning us. Our experiment highlights how easily we can be influenced by the appearance and behavior of a person. If we were interested in a product before interacting with the person who sells it can convince us either to buy it or to look for another.

The limited number of respondents is among the research boundaries, as well as male subjects. We believe that if there had been more answers then the percentages would have shown a greater difference between the answers. Another limit is the online application of the experiment. We recommend using a third video in the future, which will show a person with a neutral attitude, using an advertising text with more information about the product and a more accurate measurement of the emotions of respondents.

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A Study of the Influence of ASMR on the Behavior and Emotions of Young People in Romania Aged 14-25 through Social Media and Advertising

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Imagine you find yourself in a cafe. The sound of cups being placed on plates, whispers at the next table, swirling teaspoons in the cups, fingers on the laptop keyboards moving quickly, the constant sound of the coffee espresso, footsteps running across on the floor, doors opening and closing. You instantly feel tingling all over your body, particularly in the back of the head, resulting in immediate relaxation. The Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is a perceptual condition in which a specific audio-visual stimulus causes severe, pleasant tingling sensations in the head and neck that can spread to the rest of the body (Young, 2015: 5). The ASMR was first brought to the public's attention in 2010, which was later shortened to "cerebral orgasm". This paper attempts to understand how the ASMR phenomenon affects young people's behavior from Romania, aged 14 to 25, as well as how it is introduced to the population through Social Media advertising, as evidenced by the content analysis. The validity of the Autonomic Meridian Sensory Response was demonstrated using empirical methods in this research.

Introduction

The study is based on Julie Young and Ilse Blansert book "Idiot's Guide" and draws on the work of many important authors in the area, including Emma Barratt, Charles Spence, and Nick Davis. Autonomous behavior is described as behavior over which a person has no control. Sensory is a type of nerve that transmits information to the brain. The word "meridian" is used in Chinese medicine and it represents the life force that flows into the body from its nucleus. Response is the way the body reacts to a particular stimulus or thought.

To figure out what causes this phenomenon, think back to childhood activities like digging your toes in the sand, listening to your mother's calming voice, and so on. Julie Young divides ASMR triggers into three categories: visual (actions, images), auditory (sounds, vocal timbres), and tactile (texture, shape) (Young, 2015: 27). Triggers differ and may result in a variety of ASMR experiences: music, sounds from nature, another person's attention and/or empathy, educational storytelling, performing tasks, playing with hair, massage, or other touch-based sensations are among the most common external causes (Young, 2015: 6).

Besides being known as "Braingasm" or "Brain porn" (Poerio, 2018: 10), the research by Giulia Lara Poerio, Emma Blakey, Thomas J. Hostler, and Theresa Veltri shows that ASMR is not always correlated with sexual arousal. The intimate and interpersonal nature of some videos can lead to misunderstandings (Poerio, 2018: 14). People with chronic illnesses may also use ASMR to control their mental disorders, implying that the brain has the ability to switch between rest and relaxation and a more active executive state (Goulden, an in Barratt, 2017).

ASMR uses a variety of stimuli (whispers, touches, various sounds, etc.) to produce the same sensation, while synesthesia uses different reactions and responses depending on the synesthesia. (Felicity Callard, 2016, 128-129).

Advertisements containing ASMR can also be seen all around us, businesses as KFC, McDonald's and Michelob Ultra beer are incorporating the ASMR phenomenon into their promotional formatted campaigns (Antonova, 2017, 7). Many businesses are considering incorporating ASMR into their marketing strategy: the video's appealing and fulfilling content entices the viewer to buy the product (Boyoung, 2020, 14).

The aim of this paper is to show how this phenomenon affects the actions of all of the studied people (people aged 14-25, based in Romania), as well as the differences in their responses, based on gender, age, education, social status and emotional baggage.

We chose to conduct this study because ASMR has become a common trend among young people, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, when they are increasingly confronted with anxiety, depression, fear, and insomnia. The study is still in its early stages, with sampling restricted to a small number of people and a small area and focusing solely on the actions of young people in general.

Methodology

The current paper's desideratum is based on the hypotheses mentioned below:

H1: *Women are more likely to have a positive response to the ASMR due to the fact that they have higher sensitivity than men.*

H2: *The ASMR phenomenon is more recognizable to subjects in pre-university education.*

H3: *ASMR has been integrated into people's everyday lives through advertising.*

The current paper has dependent variables (gender, education level, ads effect), which are influenced by the independent variable: the reaction to the Autonomous Meridian Sensory Response. Statistical data and interviews were all collected in the current study. The research methods used in the paper are a sociological survey using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, as well as content analysis using a content grid. To support the simultaneous collection of data, stratification sampling was used, with sub stratification criteria such as age, gender, level of education, and the environment in which the subjects live.

We administered an only survey to a total of which was administered to a total of 201 participants, of whom 157 (78.1%) are university students, 35 (17.4%) are pre-university students, and the remaining 9 (4.5%) have completed their higher education. 175 (79.1%) of those surveyed are females, 38 (18.9%) are males, and 2% chose not to respond (appendix 1). A semi-structured interview with a Romanian psychologist-school counselor was added to better understand this phenomenon. The dialogue lasted about 25 minutes and took place online (appendix 2).

The participants' favorite ASMR types are: various sounds (writing, browsing the pages), touching surfaces with nails, food (mukbang), role-playing, mixing paint and colors, and learning or drawing activities (appendix 3). These types of ASMR can be found on social media, especially in ads. The paper analysed a series of 5 ads, during november-december 2020. The Content Analysis, which was developed using the content grid (following criteria such as: clothing, the products used, the types of asmr, sounds etc), funded the hypothesis (appendix 4).

One of our inspirations for this scientific article was *The Internet Whisperers*, the first episode of the Netflix series "Follow This". Many businesses have turned to ASMR advertising, which they have developed to market their brands. Thus, among the companies that have decided to use this type of content we count: IKEA, Ciucaș, Covalact de țară, Switch Eat Bucharest restaurant, Lay's and Muller Romania (appendix 5).

Results

The survey drew a total of 201 participants aged 14-25.

A majority of the participants in the study (181) had heard of ASMR, with 86.6% experiencing it via YouTube and other social media platforms, although 10% had never heard of it and 13.4% had never tried it.

In order to determine the reason why each participant watches ASMR videoclips, we identified a number of issues that they face in their daily lives.

Table 1. The issues present in respondes' lives

Entertainment	Stress, anxiety	Insomnia	Sadness, depression	Loneliness
40,3%	32,3%	19,9%	17,4%	12,9%

Lack of concentration	Physical pain	Do not pursue	Anger	Lack of motivation	Boredom
11,9%	9,0%	7,5%	7,5%	7%	6,5%

Moreover, we have conducted a semi-structured interview with a Romanian school therapist. From a psychological standpoint, this person stated that ASMR influences young people's behavior and reactions, associating it with pleasure and the joy of living and that it can reduce anxiety, negative thoughts, and depression. The therapist believes that there are no significant differences between the genders, but the "mother instinct" is associated with a stronger and deeper emotional value. Also, this highlights the fact that ASMR is present in the advertising industry.

The second research method, the content analysis, was based on the first episode of the Netflix Series "Follow This" and five Romanian ads. One of the results made in the study presented in "Follow This", was the discovery that this phenomenon is one of the most prevalent in our lives, and it might also be a way to disconnect from the routine and to relax. Several Romanian companies have incorporated ASMR content into their marketing. Thus, all of the five advertisements analyzed include various visual or auditory stimuli such as eating food, pouring beer into a glass, whispering, singing, unpacking, etc.

Conclusion

From this study, we managed to verify the validity or invalidity of the assumptions. The first hypothesis was not validated, as a higher number of respondents is not a valid argument. The second hypothesis was not validated, as the respondents were mainly university students. The third hypothesis was demonstrated by the content analysis of the five ads and the first episode of the series "Follow This". As a result, we managed to demonstrate that the advertising industry uses ASMR in its ads, to create a better environment for the buyer.

The limitations of the research are related to the small-sample size of the arguments we had to support the hypotheses: one semi-structured interview, a smaller number of ads analysed, the discrepancy between the number of women and men who answered the survey. Thus, we had a relatively small population analyzed, the questionnaire and the interview were applied online, we did not have access to specialized equipment, to see how the brain works and we were not creators of ASMR content. The study could be improved by expanding the number of participants, as well as dividing them into working groups and adding focus groups.

Therefore, the ASMR is the perceptual, complex and increasingly present phenomenon in our lives, which is characterized by the positive reaction of individuals through certain visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory stimuli. Besides that, the ASMR phenomenon is one of the most popular trends among social media, especially among teenagers.

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Appendixes

1. The survey: <https://forms.gle/DkBRiBayLAWmZufz7>

2. Interview guide

Step 1: Accommodation (duration - 3 minutes) the presentation of the objective (knowing the influence of the ASMR phenomenon on young people) and the way of conducting the interview takes place

Step 2: The subject's self-presentation (duration - 1 minute)

Step 3: The interview (duration - 21 minutes)

a. What does ASMR imply in terms of emotion?

b. Have you seen or heard of this phenomenon?

c. Have any of your students or patients inquired about ASMR? Or what is it?

d. Can ASMR affect young people's attitudes and reactions from a psychological standpoint?

e. What are the most popular challenges that young people face?

f. Have you ever advised a patient to seek treatment after being exposed to such stimuli?

g. Is there a difference in how women and men respond to ASMR based on their gender?

h. What would ASMR's effects be if it were used on a larger scale?

i. Does ASMR in ads and marketing have an effect on customer decision-making?

j. Is it possible to distinguish between ASMR and synesthesia?

3.

a. <https://youtu.be/BCtCOkrMlyw>

b. <https://youtu.be/ZBYv1VpRVIM>

c. https://youtu.be/4a_NGIhdqKw

d. <https://youtu.be/UX0nH4sDGKg>

e. <https://youtu.be/WxiivBn740k>

f. <https://youtu.be/LwJUHM93dLk>

g. <https://youtu.be/SzL5T9jVjUo>

4. Content grid

Company	
Clothing	
Duration	
Venue	
Product	
The person in the ad	
Types of ASMR	
The sounds used	
The colors used	

Tone	
Trigger actions	
Objects used	

5.Episode:

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/80218020?trackId=13752289&tctx=0%2C0%2Cfad88673a5996791d4b6a443a7dc444f54a409f1%3Afaabe31749d09cb11ec968988457f93d7e151abf%2Cfad88673a5996791d4b6a443a7dc444f54a409f1%3Afaabe31749d09cb11ec968988457f93d7e151abf%2Cunknown%2C>

Ads:

- a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nR4VYcUpBM>
- b. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i76uz3ezBnc>
- c. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mNVyY856cY>
- d. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5PNSrtVUas>
- e. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jC6B3gV7ZhA>

Chapter 4: THE IMPACT OF MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Exploring the Spiral of Silence in Romania. People's Willingness to Express Their Opinion on Facebook during the Coronavirus Pandemic

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Introduction

This paper's subject is exploring the spiral of silence in Romania; People's willingness to express their opinion on Facebook during the coronavirus pandemic. The uniqueness of this paper consists of the fact that there aren't any studies on the spiral of silence theory in the Romanian online environment.

The starting point of this current study consists of the strong reaction from people regarding the Facebook posts related to COVID-19 (of the authorities, online newspapers, public figures). The relevance of this topic is given by the opportune moment for carrying out this study (pandemic context) and by the results that could offer a new perspective on the spiral of silence theory. This paper aims to find out how the comments and opinions of others (on COVID-19 Facebook posts) affect the willingness of those aged 20 to 35 to express their opinion.

The spiral of silence theory was developed by Noelle Neumann in the 1970s and refers to the fact that if people feel that their opinion is in minority, they will choose to remain silent for fear of isolation from the majority group (Malaspina, 2014: 4). Thus, by observing the opinion environment, people understand whether their opinion is in the majority or not and their choice to remain silent "starts a process of spiraling in which a certain opinion is established as the predominant one." (Chen, 2018: 3918). The media and the individual public are the agencies that form this opinion environment, which ultimately influences individual beliefs (Allen, O'Loughlin, Jasperson & Sullivan, 1994: 264). Metzger notes that it is important to study the spiral of silence in certain online contexts such as social networks, especially on Facebook, which is a key site for studying the online environment. This is because, most of the time, Facebook relationships are based on real-world relationships, which would be an additional reason for the fear of social isolation. (Gearhart & Zhang, 2014: 21, apud Metzger, 2009: 571).

Methodology

This study is based on the following research questions:

Q1: How does the need for belongingness on Facebook (on the subject of COVID-19) influence the willingness of those aged 20-35 to express their opinion?

Q2: How do the comments on the Facebook posts (related to COVID-19) affect the willingness of those aged 20-35 to express their opinion?

Also, the hypotheses formulated following the collection of secondary data are:

H1: The more comments on Facebook (posts related to COVID-19) are mostly inconsistent with their opinion, the more those aged between 20 and 35-year-old avoid expressing their opinion on Facebook;

H2: The more aggressive the comments on Facebook posts are, the more those between the ages of 20 and 35 avoid expressing their opinion on social media (Facebook) on posts related to COVID-19.

The research method used was the online survey, administered through Google Forms and distributed on Facebook and WhatsApp. Being a quantitative method, it keeps respondents anonymous, which makes it easier for them to give honest answers. Also, the distribution of the survey through Facebook facilitated finding people from the chosen sample. In total, the survey included 19 questions, of which 4 were intended for collecting demographic data and it was left for completion for two weeks. The sample included women and men between the ages of 20 and 35, from Romania and is based on the assumption of reduced willingness to express their opinions on social media. The survey had a total of 102 respondents, of which 76,5% from the target age group. Regarding the gender, they were 77 women, 23 men, and two respondents of a different gender. The environment was predominantly urban (78 people), with only 24 people coming from rural areas. The level of education of the respondents is high, 77 being high school graduates, 16 college graduates, 6 master's graduates, 1 primary school, 2 vocational schools. Only one respondent didn't have a Facebook account.

Results

Although the results showed a large number of respondents who don't claim to have a different opinion for fear of social isolation (73.5%), this fear of social isolation is present to an extent among other respondents (26, 5%). It is not a high percentage, but it's identifying the existence of fear of social isolation on Facebook in Romania. We can correlate these results with the reduced willingness of expressing their opinion on Facebook on COVID-19 related posts, 90% of the respondents avoiding to express their opinion.

Relevant in supporting the research questions are also the open answers to the question as to why people avoid controversial discussions on the named topic. The answers were numerous (60) giving details about what causes them to not want to express their opinion. Thus, there were answers such as: "I'm afraid that my acquaintances would disregard me", "I don't want my family and family friends to judge me because I believe in the virus", "I have relatives on Facebook who don't believe that the coronavirus exists and would surely argue with me for that. I have already been through it." Mainly the fear of social isolation is towards family/friends that are also found on Facebook. People claim to have a different opinion (that they don't believe in the existence of the virus) to avoid judgment by those close to them. Following the results, there was a majority of respondents that refers to negative, aggressive comments, which determines them to avoid expressing their opinion on Facebook. In this regard, the answers to the question "Do you feel that it is better not to express your opinion when the comments on COVID-19 posts are aggressive?" show a high percentage (82.4%) of those who avoid expressing themselves in such situations. Therefore, aggressive comments affect the expression of opinion among those aged 20-35, supporting the spiral of silence theory.

Following the analysis of the answers in the survey, the first hypothesis was confirmed. Most respondents prefer not to express their opinion when the comments (opinions) are mostly inconsistent with theirs. The answers to the question "On a scale of 1 to 5 do you feel that your opinion about the virus is in the minority?" prove that the respondents already have a perceived majority: people who don't believe in the existence of the coronavirus. Among the respondents, 72.5% chose options 3, 4, and 5 (on a scale from 1 to 5), which indicates that people perceive their own opinion as being part of the minority. To the question "Have you ever been verbally assaulted when expressing your opinion about the virus on Facebook?", the answers showed that, although 63.2% were not verbally assaulted when they expressed their opinion, 32.2 % were verbally assaulted on Facebook when they expressed their opinion. Of those who were verbally assaulted,

44.6% were determined not to express their opinion in the future. These results support both our second hypothesis and the spiral of silence theory. Thus, the comments are mostly negative and aggressive, which causes those in the target group (perceived minority) to avoid expressing their opinion on Facebook.

Conclusion

This study proves the existence of the spiral of silence theory on Facebook in Romania, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research revealed a series of behaviors specific to the spiral of silence, which we deduced from the sociological survey.

The answers showed that the respondents are reluctant to express their opinion on Facebook because they consider themselves as being part of the minority, confirming H1. Being in the minority group, they feel the need to mask their opinion about the virus, to avoid the disapproving reactions of family and friends or even social isolation. A very important aspect identified in this study was that the main reason why those aged between 20 and 35 years do not express their opinion about the virus on Facebook are negative and aggressive comments against them (which they have experienced in the past or are trying to avoid). Respondents reported situations (23 in number) in which they were verbally assaulted in the comments on Facebook by the majority group (those who do not believe in the virus). These results confirm H2. At the same time, many answers referred to the low level of education and the misinformation of those in the majority group as a reason to avoid expressing their opinion. A common idea expressed by respondents was that it is not relevant to express their opinion about the virus on Facebook, given that the misinformed in the majority group will not understand the message they are trying to convey anyway.

In conclusion, the spiral of silence theory was confirmed by this study, the main reasons why those aged 20-35 don't want to express their opinion being the aggressive comments and the lack of education (of the majority), not the fear of social isolation.

Future research perspectives

For future research, we propose to apply the questionnaire equally to the population in each county of Romania, as well as on an equal number of women and men in each county. We also propose the addition of another method of quantitative research, content analysis. Content analysis performed on media sources tracked and used by respondents. The analysis should include the content of the Facebook posts of these media sources (position on the virus expressed), but also the number of negative/positive comments on them (position expressed/ belief in COVID-19 existence).

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Stimulus-Response Theory During the 2020 Local Elections in Bucharest. A "Burning" Problem and a Wanted Mayor, Not a Loved One

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Introduction

The subject of the paper brings together elements of political communication, media and online, analyzing the effects of stimulus-response theory in local elections in Bucharest, September 27, 2020. The year 2020 was an atypical year due to the pandemic and the development of the electoral campaigns was no exception to this fact. The paper is relevant and current because during these elections, due to the situation generated by the pandemic, election campaigns also meant a more active and visible presence of candidates on social media, especially on the social network Facebook.

The electoral campaigns studied have attracted the attention and interest of the Romanian media and also of the citizens which are not residents of Bucharest, due to the campaigns results. The two electoral campaigns were for the General City Hall of the Capital and the one for the City Hall of Sector 5. The campaigns analyzed, respectively Facebook posts, were of Gabriela Firea and Nicușor Dan who were running for the General City Hall of the Capital and of Cristian Popescu "Piedone" and Daniel Florea who were running for the city Hall of Sector 5.

The main objective of the paper is to demonstrate the presence of stimulus-response theory, analyzing a relevant amount of Facebook posts of the candidates, using items specially designed to highlight the presence of stimulus in their posts, correlation of posts – the winner of the City Hall chosen by the citizens and the candidate - citizen dialogue in the election campaign posts on Facebook.

Conducting election campaigns online is considered a communication medium that manages to bring politics closer to the people and in its proper use generates a high degree of mobilization and sympathy from the electorate, while using online communication tools, such as the social networking platform Facebook is the politician's easiest way to win over the young electorate (Toader, Grigorași, Frunză, 2011, 7).

As for the stimulus-response theory, it works in situations of social disorder or in campaigns that aim to influence the public (Coman, 2016, 153). 2020 was a year marked by a pandemic that has generated social disorder and thus making the events of 2020, including local election campaigns, events relevant to the identification and analysis of stimulus-response theory.

Methodology

The paper uses content analysis to explain the stimulus-response theory and its effects in the results of local elections in Bucharest, held on September 27, 2020. The stimulus-response theory was identified in these elections, in social media campaigns, on the social network Facebook.

Research done by the means of content analysis and the construction of the content grid with specific items answered in the affirmative to the question: was the intensity of the stimuli used in Facebook posts reflected in the results of the offline elections?

The hypotheses of the paper were: the more candidates used social media for electoral purposes, the more inclined voters were to choose them and the more incentives candidates used in their posts, the better their chances of being elected. Both hypotheses were confirmed.

The electoral campaigns, respectively the Facebook posts analyzed were those of the candidates for the General City Hall of the Capital, Gabriela Firea and Nicușor Dan, and those of the candidates for the City Hall of Sector 5, Cristian Popescu "Piedone" and Daniel Florea.

Items included in the analysis followed the tone of the analyzed post to the identification of the primary and secondary stimulus, the use of hashtags and the interaction of Facebook users with the post. 20 posts by Nicușor Dan out of a total of 191 and 10 posts by Gabriela Firea out of a total of 100 were analyzed, sampling one in every 10 post of each candidate. In case of candidates Cristian Popescu "Piedone" and Daniel Florea, one in every 5 post were sampled, resulting in the analysis of 7 posts belonging to Cristian Popescu "Piedone" and 4 of Daniel Florea.

Results

The most predominant tone of all four campaigns was the accusatory tone towards the opponent or the political party to which the candidate belongs. The stimuli that contributed to the victory of the General City Hall by Nicușor Dan and the City Hall of Sector 5 by Cristian Popescu "Piedone" were those relating to the culture and daily life of voters such as lack of hot water, lack of accessibility to local government bodies, the need to change the current situation in which Bucharest finds itself, respectively Sector 5.

The posts of the winner of the elections for the General City Hall of the Capital, Nicușor Dan, were clearly different from those of Gabriela Firea. Most of Nicușor Dan's posts referred to the mismanagement of the city by the acting mayor and management and used stimuli such as promoting the idea of New Bucharest, change, the humiliations endured by the citizens of Bucharest from the lack of hot water, heat or the ability to communicate with administrative authorities effectively.

Nicușor Dan's opponent and acting mayor, Gabriela Firea, approached the election campaign on Facebook in a different way, by sharing personal moments from her life out of the desire to attract potential voters to her side portraying herself as a devoted wife and homemaker. Gabriela Firea's posts mainly stimuli like the health crisis caused by the pandemic, a crisis that Gabriela Firea said she can manage from the position of Mayor of the Capital, also many other stimuli related to social assistance, children, family or even fear of infertile couples to remain without funding for the IVF program - In Vitro Fertilization, a program that gives them hope to conceive a child.

Nicușor Dan's victory of election is due to the electoral campaign carried out in the online environment and social media app Facebook but also due to the amount of campaign posts and stimuli used in his online speech, stimuli with a strong impact on the citizens of Bucharest.

Cristian "Piedone" Popescu's online election campaign contains far fewer posts compared to those of the candidates for the General City Hall but he also used an accusatory majority tone at the sitting mayor of Sector 5 and also used stimuli such as unsafe playgrounds for children, the start-up and non-completion of projects, the filth in Sector 5 or the general disinterest of local authorities.

Daniel Florea preferred to use his Facebook page very little during the election campaign. Most of his posts, much like Gabriela Firea's, where of moments from his personal life and less political speech.

Children were used as the main stimulus in Daniel Florea's posts, the belief and induction of the idea that the press misinforms, presenting data about him incompletely. The much higher number of posts with coherent political discourse and the use of stimuli is what contributed to Cristian Popescu "Piedone" win of the City Hall of Sector 5.

Conclusion

Voters' turnout on September 27, 2020, has been due also to the online campaigns carried out on Facebook by the candidate and stimuli used in their respective campaigns. With the help of the content analysis, the research identified stimuli such as family, children, health, the internal and local culture of voters, lack of hot water, lack of accessibility to local government, lack of respect from local elected officials, the need for change. Currently, there is an interest in the use of online communication by Romanian politicians and respectively the use of social platforms as a means of broadcasting and promoting political discourse. The content analysis and the construction of the items in the content grid took into account the specific objectivity of the sociological research and

the confirmation of the hypotheses and the affirmative answer to the research question were demonstrated.

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Social Media Influencers and Their Impact on the Students of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences

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Introduction

The topic of this paper falls into the category of social media communication and the influence that online influencers have on their followers. The purpose of the paper was to find out the impact that online influencers have on the students of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, and whether or not they contribute to shaping or changing their opinions, attitudes, beliefs, values or behaviors. This topic of research is justified by the fact that there are not enough studies that focus specifically on social media influencers and the relationships they have with their followers or the persuasive effects that they can have on them (Taillon et al., 2020, 2). As well as that, the number of social media influencers is growing at an ever-increasing rate (Taillon et al., 2020, 2) and therefore, young people who use social media platforms are becoming more and more susceptible to these popular online personas and their opinions.

Furthermore, the relevance of the current study is justified by the fact that over the last couple of years, the rate of social media usage has seen a significant increase (Jarman et al., 2021, 1). Therefore, social media platforms have become indispensable to most young people, making it rather difficult for them not to constantly use their phones in order to keep up with the latest news. This high level of social media usage is relevant for the current research topic because it translates to influencers gaining more accessibility to impressionable young people. In terms of originality, the paper brings something new to the current body of research as it follows the cultivation theory developed by George Gerbner. This theory discusses the long-term effects that television can have on viewers and the idea that it can shape people's beliefs, values, perspectives, or views on the world (Mosharafa, 2015, 3).

Moreover, the findings of different research papers on the topic of influencers or the cultivation theory have helped guide and shape the current study. Among others, those findings include the positive effects that mass and social media had on the views and behavioral changes of people after the 2011 Japan earthquake, such as their intention to contribute to activities regarding post-disaster recovery (Cheng et al., 2016, 16). Another study found that influencers can change certain perceptions and possibly even behaviors regarding the flu vaccine because their followers identify and resonate with them (Bonnevie et al., 2020, 10).

The current paper tries to find the connection between the cultivation theory and social media influencers, and whether or not prolonged exposure to these influencers can lead to a change in the value systems and worldviews of the people who follow them. Aspects regarding influences and changes in opinions, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior were followed. To this end, the paper focused on answering the following research questions:

RQ1: Do students from the faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences change or form their opinions, attitudes or values as a result of the influence of the social media influencers they follow?

RQ2: To what extent are the students from the faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences influenced by the social media influencers they follow online?"

Methodology

Following the research questions, the hypothesis of the study is “Students of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences are not affected to such an extent by influencers that they end up changing their behaviors (as opposed to only opinions or beliefs).” Also, the research method used was of a quantitative type, the indirect sociological survey, and an online questionnaire was developed to this end. The sample consisted of students from the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences and the sampling method was a non-probabilistic one. The questionnaire was distributed to online social media groups and it was available for completion over a period of 15 days (20.11.2020 – 04.12.2020). It consisted of 18 questions such as opinion-based, factual and socio-demographic ones. The questions focused on finding out the measure in which the students are influenced by the people they follow online, in terms of ideas, opinions, values, and behaviors, and they were formulated in a manner that would provide answers for the two research questions and the hypothesis.

Results

The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire has led to interesting discoveries. It was completed by a number of 51 students (37 women and 14 men) with ages ranging from 18 to 24 years old. The platform that students use the most is Instagram, with the majority of them spending between 3 and 4 hours on social media, followed closely by those who spend between 5 and 6 hours online. Therefore, the majority of students fall into the category of light users (media consumption of <4h/ day), but there are still numerous students who fall into the category of heavy users (media consumption of >4h/ day). These numbers indicate a rather high level of social media dependency, which can also mean that the influencers on these platforms have a lot of accessibility and even influence over these students since more than half of the respondents claim that they often feel the need to follow the posts of their favorite influencers on a day-to-day basis.

Furthermore, a considerable majority of students claim that their favorite influencers help them shape their opinions on certain topics which may be due to the relationship of trust between them. This relationship of trust is formed by strong connections based on sincerity, credibility, attractiveness, and similarity. However, interestingly enough, the students do not allow their preexistent opinions to be influenced by the people they follow. Moreover, in terms of behaviors and actions, the answers were divided. Half of the respondents claim that they allow and that they have allowed their behaviors and actions to be influenced by the popular online personas they follow, while the other half claims to have never changed aspects regarding behavior. The changes in behavior that the students have mentioned include aspects concerning physical activity and workout routines, eating behaviors, skincare routines, media consumption habits, and more.

Another interesting find is that some students often shape and form their opinions about important subjects of public interest after being influenced by the opinions of the influencers they follow online. Also, more than half of the students claim to have considered information given by influencers as true, without fact-checking first or considering other sources. This shows the high level of trust that these students have in their favorite influencers.

Conclusion

In regard to the first research question, more than half of the students who completed the questionnaire claim that their favorite influencers play a substantial part in helping them form opinions and attitudes regarding various subjects of interest. However, an interesting find is that they do not allow their preexistent opinions to be changed or modified by influencers. If they have already made up their mind on a certain topic, it will be harder or even impossible for influencers to change their opinion, but they will allow these popular online personas to shape their beliefs about topics that are new to them or that they do not have enough information on. This increased influence is largely due to the trust that young people have in their favorite influencers.

As to the second research question, the students are influenced to a moderate extent by the influencers they follow online. Moreover, the hypothesis of the study has only been partially confirmed, as the answers of the students were divided. Half of the respondents claim that they have never changed their behavior as a result of the influence of the popular people they follow online, while the other half claims that they have changed various behaviors. Therefore, by following the cultivation theory, the study demonstrated that prolonged exposure to social media influencers cultivates certain values, opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and even certain behaviors among students.

Furthermore, the paper brings empirical contributions to the field of social media influencers and their influence over young people by proving that the opinions, beliefs, values, and even behaviors of students can be shaped and formed by the people they follow. The study also has certain limitations such as the low number of participants, and the subjects being mostly of feminine sex, which translates to the results not being representative and the gender not having any researched or determined relevance in the studied topic. In terms of future research perspectives, it is recommended that researchers use several other methodological approaches that could provide more detailed information, such as interviews. Thus, aspects regarding specific intricacies of the power that influencers hold over young people and their beliefs can be better observed and analyzed.

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How does YouTube Influence the Independence of People between the Age of 15 and 25?

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The main purpose of this study is to find out the factors that determine young people to consume educational content on the Youtube platform. The subjects of this sample were chosen according to the age category of 15-25 years. In conducting the study, sociological survey and interview were used as research methods. Thus, we obtained both quantitative and qualitative data. The concepts behind our research are: time management on the internet and on the Youtube platform and how they use educational videos to help them in their professional life. Simplified definition of what Youtube really is and the extent of its impact and how young people are influenced by it: popular content that is frequently read by young people and the desire to learn from the Internet than from a physical course. In carrying out this work, research methods were used, studies based on the use of youtube. At the moment we live in the internet age, children using smartphones from an early age and tend to use different types of applications becoming more and more curious about what is happening around them. As a result, they have a natural desire to learn new things with the help of tutorials.

Introduction

Fifteen years ago, on February 15, 2005, Youtube was launched as a video sharing platform, which created a huge impact among people, especially young people. Before, there were a lot of things you couldn't learn without help, but now everything can be solved with a simple search. We chose this topic for our study because it is a very common phenomenon, this study following the importance of Youtube in the intellectual and personal development of young people aged 15 to 25, individualization and independence without asking for help, rather using tutorials for school lessons, cooking, for learning and improving photo / video editing applications, 3d modeling and programming tutorials, these being a small part of the platform.

Technology is constantly evolving, changing people's daily lives, and Youtube can help you gain new skills, which can help you take advantage of future opportunities. "YouTube is an art medium, a technology that allows listeners to become singers, viewers to become actors and consumers to become producers by creating new original works and complementing existing ones. It allows everyone to have a voice that can be heard and a face that can be seen." Our study aims to find out the daily number of hours spent by young people aged 15 to 25 on the Internet, the number of hours spent on the Youtube platform, the type of content they prefer but also the areas of interest. Today's young people and students are much more oriented towards the digital age than those in the too informative age. In particular, social networks are also used to communicate, collaborating with a wider community, meanwhile becoming a popular educational tool among young people. Providing education through the internet has strengthened the concept and way of learning of many young people. Sites that benefit from video sharing are the most important, as is the Youtube platform, which offers access to new learning opportunities, different from traditional models. The videos that are uploaded to this platform also influence the universities and the way students learn. Through the Youtube platform, all people benefit from free and high-quality content to improve learning. Many teachers have joined this trend and take advantage of the platform for teaching courses. They found an alternative to textbooks to provide information to young people.

Several studies have been conducted based on the use of Youtube by pupils and students. In Saudi Arabia at Abdul-Aziz University, among students in the 18-20 age groups, a Capstone project

was conducted by Michael Ickowicz in April 2008. The study described “A better understanding of student behaviors”. Many researchers have addressed this topic and conducted comparative studies in which the use of YouTube videos has proven to be a growing trend. Research on the use of educational videos showing that they appeal to consumers' auditory and visual memory is supported by the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer). The theory is based on three assumptions: there are two separate ways of processing information, auditory and visual, and the third assumption is that people can process a finite amount of information. It also argues that learning is an active process of sorting, selecting, organizing and integrating information. This theory explains the processes that take place in the minds of students during learning from multimedia instruction. Mayer and Moreno (2003) define multimedia as a use of words and images, verbal and visual. According to Mayer and Moreno (2002: 90), "the cognitive integration process is most likely to occur when the student has appropriate visual and verbal representations in working memory at the same time." Moreover, the use of YouTube has been found to attract students' attention (Buzzetto More, 2014; Duverger & Steffes, 2012; Greenberg and Zanetis, 2012), to make learning more interesting and to improve the overall learning process. Specifically, well-chosen videos were found on the YouTube platform that help students engage more deeply in the subject and remember more easily the information they learned, for which they invested more time. YouTube has also been shown to expand access to information, promote critical thinking, active and flexible learning environments, support analytical discourse, and more reasoning approaches, provide students with memory cues to support visualization conceptualization, increasing depth of view. to understand of students. At the same time, Youtube rose quite quickly among other social networks and became the most visited site in the world. The platform has established a unique role as a repository of information.

Methodology

The first method I used was the sociological survey using the questionnaire, which was answered by 113 young people (56 boys and 55 girls). The second method used was the interview, with the interview guide as a tool, which was answered by two young people (two boys). To conduct the study, each participant used their own computer. I used the Google Forms application to create an online questionnaire that I distributed on various social networking sites. The interview guide was printed, and the interview was conducted face to face with the subjects. I used Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to record the data. To carry out the study we used the following materials: the personal computer of each person in the project. I used the Google Forms application to create an online questionnaire, which I distributed on various social networking sites. The interview guide was printed, and the interview was conducted face to face with the subjects. I used Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to record the data. The first step towards starting the project was choosing the theme. We chose the topic "How does independent Youtube influence (using tutorials) people between the ages of 15 and 25", because it seems to us a topical issue, especially in this difficult period. The category we chose was an accessible one because we consider that during this age most of the information is accumulated. The second step was documentation. At this stage we documented other studies conducted in this field, so we defined the main concepts. The third step was sampling. Our subjects were chosen according to the age category of 15-25 years. We chose the research methods: the first research was quantitative, being the sociological survey having as tool the questionnaire, and the second method used for conducting the research was the interview having as tool the interview guide, in which we chose 3 subjects who specialize in two fields different (all three are male). The subjects were specially chosen so that they could give us some of their experience. The third step I took was to divide the questionnaire into a number of four subjects. To identify possible construction errors, difficulties in completing or other possible obstacles that respondents may encounter in completing it.

Results

Following the data obtained based on the application of the online questionnaire, we identified as valid 110 answers out of 113. The socio-demographic distribution consists of 49.6% men and 48.7% women. They generated the following results: of the respondents, 35.4% stated that they spend on the internet between 6 and 8 hours, for 31% they spend their time on the internet between 3 and 5 hours, and for 30.1% between 9 and 12 hours.

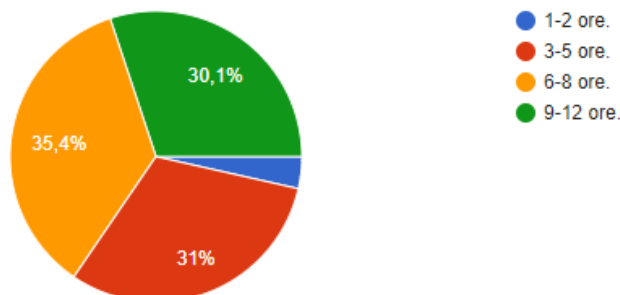


Figure 1. How many hours do they spend on the internet

Of the respondents 16.2% spend 1 hour on Youtube, of the respondents 38.7% spend their time on Youtube for 2 hours, for 20.7% are spend time on Youtube for 3 hours, of the respondents 9% spent 4 hours time on Youtube, and 2.7% spent 5 hours on Youtube, of the respondents 2.7% spent 6 hours on Youtube in one day.

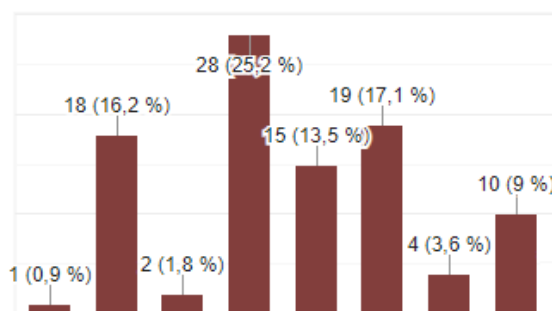


Figure 2. Graphic representation of the hours spent on the Youtube platform

Conclusion

From the results provided it can be seen that the Youtube platform has an influence on young people when it comes to a future career. Thus, the tutorials on the Youtube platform are the first contact with young people today. Most young people (38.7%) said they spend 2 hours on Youtube. They point out that the tutorials uploaded on the platform helped them a lot to acquire new skills or to see new things for certain areas. This can be seen from the results of the questionnaire which states that they find quality in the materials provided (92.9%), they found the desired content on the platform (99.1%) and the interview of the three people explaining how they found their way to a field and to practice, starting from the first studies offered by the tutorials uploaded on Youtube. However, given the small number of people who took part in our experiment, we cannot consider the conclusions of a larger population of young people aged 15-25. Among the limitations of the research are the small sample of young people who completed the questionnaire and the people who took part in the interview. The hypothesis I started from was confirmed. The main purpose of this study was to find out the factors that determine young people to consume educational content on the Youtube platform: the popular content that is frequently read by young people and the desire to learn from the Internet than from a physical course. In carrying out this

work, research methods, studies based on the use of youtube were used. The methods of use we used allowed us to approach the problem in terms of quantity and quality.

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The Impact of COVID-19 on the Body Image of emerging adults

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The current paper analyzes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the body image of young adults between 18 and 25 years old. Through the research it was revealed that the consequences of the pandemic, such as quarantination and especially higher social media consumption, had an effect on the young adults in the target audience.

The concept of body image was first used in 1935 by Paul Schilder, an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist, describing the concept as the picture of our own body which we form in our mind (Schilder, 1935). Until now this concept has received numerous definitions and the subject has been debated countless times in various researches and scientific articles, but also in the press.

With the constant development and the accessibility of technology among the population, mass-media has become a strong reason for body image issues to arise (Huang, Peng, Ahn, 2020: 5). The consequences of poor body image can be extremely damaging and result in mental health problems, eating disorders, low self esteem and even a strong wish for plastic surgery (Walker et al., 2019).

Teenagers and young adults are prone to comparing their appearance to the eurocentric beauty standards on social media. Instagram and its effects on body image among teenagers has been studied in many different countries and it is portrayed as a system of cultivation on the self-image of young people, but also a means of social comparison - related to the theory of cultivation, respectively the theory of social comparison - (Stein, Krause, Ohler, 2021: 87).

In Romania there are not many studies regarding the topic and the implications of social media upon it. This paper is an outline on how the COVID-19 quarantine has affected the body image of young social media users from Romania, Transylvania. With more time at home and with all interactions exclusively on social media platforms, more people developed body image problems, and some resulted in even worse consequences.

Methodology

The hypotheses proposed for supporting and testing the chosen topic are:

H1: High social media consumption is correlated with body image issues.

H2: The COVID-19 quarantine affected teenagers' body image.

In hopes of contributing to the romanian literature on the topic, a questionnaire was developed based on other important body image scales. An important component of positive self-image is body appreciation, defined as accepting and creating positive opinions about one's body and rejecting the ideals and standards of beauty promoted by mass media. To study this component, the Body Appreciation Scale (BAS) was developed as a 13-item questionnaire (Tylka, Wood-Barcalow, 2015: 53). Subsequently, after an error analysis, this test was optimized in a 10-item questionnaire known as BAS-2, and used in many studies regarding body image.

Based on the most important items in the BAS-2 and on the literature review, I developed an 18-item online survey (the survey contains 18 *required* questions, optional questions and demographic questions). The survey was created via Google Forms. The targeted audience was formed of teenagers from 18 to 25 years old. All respondents were found either on facebook groups or on instagram, through instagram stories.

Results

The survey had 295 responses, out of which 10 respondents were not in the target audience or their response was not valid. The first question of the survey is a multiple-choice grid for affirmations, from total disagreement to total agreement. For the affirmation “I use social media a lot more now than before the pandemic” 116 respondents were in total agreement, and only 51 were neutral or less. There are 4 more affirmations in this grid, all regarding if the respondents compare their body and if social media is a reason for their comparison. These affirmations revealed that more than half of the respondents are not happy with their looks and they compare themselves to what they see in the media.

The next question is about the amount of time they spend on social media daily: 38,3% spend between 2 and 4 hours, 31,5% spend between 4 and 6 hours and 18% spend more than 6 hours. The top three apps they use are in order: Instagram, Youtube, Facebook Messenger. It was important to gather information on the social media consumption in order to ask further questions on body image and the respondents’ perception on social media’s influence upon it. One of the most important questions of the survey is “Do you think social media portrays a certain beauty standard that’s hard to reach?”, to which 250 respondents answered YES. Even if through the next question we learned that the respondents don’t feel the need to reach that beauty standard, more than half of them feel judged by their appearance, but at the same time, they claim to not need the validation of the people around them. This might be one of the limits of the study, because there were only a few questions on this specific matter.

It was important to ask the respondents to choose which of some disorders or problems they have developed because of their body image. Most of the respondents claim to have low self esteem because of their body image, anxiety, and even eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, binge eating, and restrictive eating). The next half of the survey is based on their change in habits during the pandemic on three major aspects: exercise, diet and skincare.

More than 60% of the respondents started doing sports in order to lose weight at the beginning of the pandemic. Out of this number, only a little below 35% of them are still working out now. The main sports they tried were workout programmes (78,2%), especially the ones on YouTube. Many of those were promoted on tiktok (Chloe Ting, Pamela Reif etc.), and the hashtags for those are still viral.

Regarding their diet, only 39,3% of the respondents claimed to have made changes during the pandemic. Those who did tried diets or counting calories, even restricting, but the majority tried Intermittent Fasting, a change in the routine of eating, promoted on social media and YouTube. Even so, half of the people who started a diet/change stopped because of reasons such as not feeling good, not finding something they like or developing an eating disorder.

Skincare has become a very common subject in the media, especially on tiktok. 64.7% respondents changed their skincare routine during the pandemic, and out of those, 55.3% used skincare products promoted by influencers or content creators. The most important aspect is that 84.7% of respondents did not consult a dermatologist before changing their skincare routine with the products.

Most of the behavioral and lifestyle changes were made without consulting any kind of professional, which is problematic. The top toxic behaviors the respondents have developed during the pandemic are: analyzing their body obsessively in the mirror a few times a day, being too preoccupied with their skincare (as in pimples, texture etc.) and comparing with people around them, not only people in the media. Respondents have also developed habits such as counting calories, weighing their food, or measuring their body or their kilograms many times a day.

Conclusion

The survey results revealed that the pandemic affected the body image of young adults between 18 and 25 years old, because of the higher social media consumption. Thus, even though the pandemic didn't affect the body image directly, its biggest consequence - moving everything

online and staying at home - has affected the mental health of youngsters regarding themselves. Both hypotheses were confirmed through the methodology.

The limits of this study are mainly in the methodology. The survey had some errors and some questions could have been improved for better understanding of the problem. As for further perspectives, I wish to improve the study and take it on another level through my bachelor's degree, in the near future.

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The Image and Evolution of the Female Character in Post-Revolutionary Romanian Cinema

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Introduction

This paper focuses on the portrayal female character in the Romanian post-revolutionary cinematography. The present research is based on the complex analysis of the author Laura Grünberg (2005), which defines relevant concepts such as gender, gender role, and gender stereotypes. Moreover, the image of the communist films was discussed to ensure a better understanding of the post- revolutionary cinema. Although the mentality in traditional societies has changed, the gender role expectations are so deeply imprinted that they decisively affect the immediate perception (Iluţ, 2000:184, in Stănculescu, 2009: 1).

The cinematography reflects reality and can continuously shape perceptions and opinions about interpersonal relationships. Prolonged exposure to certain negative behaviors transmitted through the *global screen* has the power to normalize and encourage certain behaviours. Thus, this paper is based on Laura Grünberg's analysis; Grünberg believes that the representation of reality, whether correct or false, has a non-negligible impact on individual perceptions and implicitly on perpetuation or diminution of gender stereotypes (Grünberg, 2005: 57). Gender stereotypes are indeed displayed and strengthened in Romanian series and in post-communist films. The woman is presented in various poses, such as the naive woman, the hysterical woman, the easy woman, the female villain, and the *femme fatale*.

Romania remains anchored in traditional values and encourages gender roles. Moreover, the Bechdel test is also included in the analysis. This tool is often ignored by film critics and researchers, although it is relevant to the way women are seen in a patriarchal society.

This paper is based on the following hypothesis and a single research question:

H. The image of women in Romanian films has evolved from the early 2000s to the present.

Q. What are the defining characteristics of female characters in post-revolutionary films compared to those of male characters?

Methodology

The present research will focus on an in-depth analysis of six post-revolutionary Romanian films, using the data analysis technique. They were selected based on the following requirements. Firstly, all films received international awards. Secondly, they are part of three different periods: the beginning of the 2000s, before Romania acceded to the European Union, the global financial crisis between 2007- 2010, and the present. The award-winning films were selected randomly through an online generator, excluding those which portrayed the communist regime.

The following movies were watched several times and then analyzed: *Marfa şi banii* (2001), *Moartea domnului Lăzărescu* (2006), *O zi bună de plajă* (2008), *Morgen* (2010), *Superman, Spiderman sau Batman* (2011), *Poziţia copilului* (2013).

These criteria were followed: the age of the characters, the occupation, their characteristics, the roles they fulfill within family life, the relationships with their life partner, and the dynamics of male and female interactions.

Results

In movies, we often meet male characters who are older, more mature, and stronger than women. Women are younger, much more attractive, and beautiful than male characters. Female

characters tend to be presented in a much more attractive way than male actors. Thus, they can become potential erotic or sexual objects for the male audience and role models for the female audience. Men occupy leadership positions much more often than female characters while women have jobs associated with care or subordination (nursing, sex worker, cashier, etc.).

The relationships between male and female characters are complex and require an in-depth analysis. The results showed that the male characters have qualities associated with their biological sex; they are harsh, calm, determined, know more than women, and often use coarse language to express their opinions. Women are associated with feminine traits: they are polite, calm, naive, obedient, vulnerable, and do not use profanities. Acts of violence are associated only with male characters who exhibit volcanic behavior and are easily irritated.

Conclusion

Although it may seem that the image of the woman evolves the hypothesis could not be validated, as more data is needed from movies released after 2013. Women are still associated with *feminine* traits while men are strong, determined, and are often violent. This type of behavior is discussed in the literature, especially in the feminist film theory of the twentieth century. To expand upon this research, more films should be analysed.

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Piracy&Chill: Can Streaming Platforms Such as Netflix Become an Antidote to the Culture of Piracy in Romania?

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Do most students in Romania choose legal means of streaming to the detriment of pirated sources? Is there an ethical reasoning behind their choice or is it a matter of comfort? In order to answer those questions, the paper takes a close look at the Netflix platform as the most popular online streaming service both in Romania and globally. The case study is limited to the comparison between Romanian and students from CIS. A social survey with 287 respondents allowed for a detailed analysis of the differences between media consumption in various cultural spaces and practices. We used the method of content analysis to compare Netflix with other VOD (video-on-demand) platforms available on the Romanian market and to observe disparities between the content distributed by the platform for Romania and for other 7 countries. The study concluded that, indeed, most students in Romania tend to choose legal streaming platforms to the detriment of pirated movies. At the same time, the Netflix platform cannot become an antidote to the culture of piracy in Romania, because as long as the desired content is not provided by the SVOD- monopoly, consumers are always ready to return to piracy to satisfy their desires. The paper proposed methods to reduce illegal practices in the analyzed areas based on the participants' answers with different cultural backgrounds. The key to a new face of VOD services is awareness of consumer needs and the ability to manage their attention through a specific marketing strategy.

Introduction

How can only one streaming service be an indicator of the piracy trend around the world? Can it become a tool to combat this phenomenon? Is there any chance to “beat” piracy? This study takes a deep dive into history and gradual changes in company policy and makes a use of compellingly rich literature to address these questions and apply the information collected to a case study of Romanian and students from CIS.

Netflix is just one example of a SVOD (subscription video on demand) platform, but in addition to these services, pirated sources also circulate on the Internet, which are often easier to access and have a much wider range of titles. From a daily common observation, it seems that students no longer use pirated streaming sources as much since the advent of the Netflix platform, and we speculate that this is due to growing popularity that Netflix has, owing to its marketing strategy and original business model, rather than ethical decision-making.

In order to verify this theory, this paper studies the trends in Netflix use of the young population in Romania, more precisely relevant to Romanian students, and applies, as research methods, social survey and content analysis. We utilized a social survey method and collected 287 responses from Romanian and CSI students to allow for the analysis of the differences between media consumption practices. An analysis grid helped us find if students benefit more from the content provided by Netflix for Romania than for 7 other countries and compare five streaming platforms on the Romanian market (two of them being illegal streaming services) to find out what attracts Romanian users the most and why.

The study refers to data collected by previous researchers and applies the possible psychological reasons analyzed in J. Riekkinen's research (2018) for the tendency of consumers to continue using pirated services. Two theories we take the closest look at are a theory known in criminology as neutralization theory (NT), proposed by Sykes and Matza (1957, 664-670) to

address juvenile delinquency, and Festinger's (1962, 103-121) theory of cognitive dissonance (CDT) that comes from the social psychology.

Methodology

The study is based on the observation about increasing numbers of students that resort to ethical consumption of digital media to the detriment of the consumption of pirated films. The curiosity to observe the increasing trend during the COVID-19 pandemic motivated the formulation of the first hypothesis: Most students in Romania tend to choose legal streaming platforms to the detriment of pirated movies.

In order to support this hypothesis, we used two research methods. We utilized a quantitative method of social survey to formulate the questionnaire in Romanian and then translate into Russian to allow the analysis of the differences between the media consumption of heterogeneous spaces and cultural practices. Following the application of the online questionnaire through social platforms such as Facebook, Whatsapp and VK, 287 responses were collected.

Two analysis grids were used as instruments for the second research method. A first content analysis is based on the research question: Do Romanians benefit from the services offered by the Netflix platform? It considers a comparison between the services offered by Netflix for eight different states. The second analysis compares five streaming platforms on the Romanian market, two of them being illegal streaming services. The proposed research question is: Do Romanians tend to choose the most popular or the most accessible option?

Results

Social Survey

The main focus of our first method is both analyzing the results of social survey in Romania (52 students) and comparing them to the one conducted between 235 CSI students in order to observe the main cultural disparities and different stages of Netflix expansion (Russia is the last one to get access to the platform). The most relevant antagonisms arose from the percentage of participants that use the platform: 94.2% in Romania and 43.4% in CIS.

In the question asking to describe the advantages of Netflix over other streaming services, students in Romania highlighted all the strengths of the platform such as image quality, content diversity, and lack of advertising, whereas CIS participants were outraged by the services that this platform offers in relation to the price. The study found out that only 32.7% Romanians, yet 84.3% CSI students, use illegal sources. Whereas CIS students frequently and abusively use pirated sources, 1/3 of Romanians who recourse to them do it "very rarely" and only 1/10 often and repeatedly.

All respondents motivated choosing Netflix for its quality, ease of use and attractive design. Romanian students also valued the diversity of the films, the lack of advertisements and the convenience offered by the legal platforms; however, for the CIS students the financial part is more important. They highlighted the high price and easy access to pirated sources as key factors in their decision to not become SVOD subscribers.

The results proved that Netflix holds the absolute monopoly and devotion of the Romanian market and is viewed differently by Romanian students compared to those in the CIS. Even if there were similar points of view, most opinions demonstrate the different mentalities that students have depending on the country they come from.

Content Analysis I

In order to answer a first research question, we compared eight states (Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Russia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and South Korea), in seven aspects related to the particularities of the platform. The most relevant findings are the disparities between the dimension of available film archives and the price of the subscription, thus, profitability. Romanians and Moldovans pay twice more for each film watched than an average UK resident.

Content Analysis 2

The second analysis compares five streaming platforms on the Romanian market: Netflix, HBO Go, Amazon Prime Video, Mubi and filmeserialeonline.org. Unfortunately, only from the information available to the public on this topic, it is impossible to give a pertinent answer to the second research question. However, the interesting data discovered is the number of titles available to consumers, where Amazon Prime Video offers a wider range than such illegal streaming service as filmeserialeonline.ro, which does not depend on obtaining copyrights and includes films belonging to several production companies. The Netflix library is distinct, because almost half of it (1,500 titles out of 3,813) is originally produced content. The number of subscribers is published only by the Netflix platform, which convinces over 2,600,000 Romanians to pay for the services offered.

Conclusion

Following the research, the first hypothesis is verified. Indeed, most students in Romania choose legal means of streaming to the detriment of pirated sources. At the same time, the Netflix platform cannot become an antidote to the culture of piracy in Romania, because as long as the desired content is not provided by SVOD-monopoly, consumers are always ready to return to piracy practices to satisfy desires to the detriment of other legal practices.

Although users in Romania are not exactly advantaged by this service, the current study found out that Romanian consumers are loyal to a platform until they are forced to migrate, temporarily, to other sources (even if they are unethical, as it appears from Welter's study (2010), because they cannot find a certain title. As for the differences between cultural spaces, the CIS states are more reluctant when it comes to new global digital streaming services. They prefer local platforms even if most of them are pirated, while Romania is right on the border between the two means.

The major problem underlined by this study is that most consumers pay for comfort, not for ethical reasons. Piracy is not considered morally wrong because a concrete victim of this behavior cannot be identified (Yu, 2012 in Frick, 2019). There might not exist a way to "beat" piracy, however, there are several ways to add value to the industry, all related to the consumer. The key to a new face of SVOD services, according to M. Smith and R. Telang (2016), is consumer awareness and the ability to manage consumer attention.

The paper has also encountered certain limitations such as the reluctance of Romanian students to answer the questionnaire and finding information valid for the content analyzes. Most important limits are the chosen population and the confidentiality of most required data. The conclusions are, therefore, relevant strictly to students in Romania and CSI. As underlined by Loh (2019), students are the ones more willing to consume pirated content, because they have both the time and the necessary technical skills, however do not have a stable income to afford ethical resources.

One factor that has influenced VOD consumption and the development of the industry in the last few months is the COVID-19 pandemic. MUSO, the largest anti-piracy company in the world, has discovered that there has been a continuous increase in the consumption of pirated materials since 2019. In 2020, the growth is considerably higher due to the social and economic crisis, but also because many consumers have had to use only online streaming sources, both legally and extra-legally. Piracy is, therefore, far from being combated, but can be reduced by marketing techniques appropriate to the social context. Future research is needed to analyze long-term consequences of Netflix policy on the piracy culture in East Europe.

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Similarities between the Collective Online Behavior and the Collective Physical Behaviour.

The Collective Online Behaviour during the Covid Pandemic

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This work paper brings together two concepts: “online movements” and “collective behaviour”. The Covid-19 pandemic situation not only turned people's physical lives upside down but also their virtual lives online. Studying this topic is very important because the effect of these collective behaviours usually leads to a social change. The objectives of this research are: to describe the collective behaviours of the online environment in times of crisis and to explain how a large number of people can influence the decisions, opinions or actions of a smaller number of people. The novelty element of the paper brings together the 2 dimensions of collective behaviour: from the physical to the online environment. The research is divided into 2 main directions, analyzing: collective behaviour in the physical environment and collective behaviour in the online environment. Among the most important theoretical elements in the paper are: infodemia, social contagion, fake-news, rumours, crowds, mass-behaviour.

The main objective of the research is to compare the collective human behaviour in the online environment during the pandemic and the physical mass-action. The second objective of the research is to analyse the impact that the online environment has and how it can change people's perceptions in crisis situations. The study verifies how influential people are, what makes them acquire certain beliefs, and which are the most important influencing factors on social networks. Literature review includes aspects from the domain of psycho sociology, terms such as: social identity, community, conformity and psychological crowd, but also concepts, forms of online communication: fake news, the spiral of silence, public opinion and manipulation.

Introduction

Actual society is defined by the period when the normality of daily life has stopped, or rather, changed radically due to the pandemic caused by the Corona Virus. Because of that, people being forced to adapt to these changes. As for the rules and restrictions imposed, they divided the population into 2 categories: those who agree and abide by the rules imposed and those who believe that the virus does not exist and is in fact a tool to manipulate the population, abusing of power. The appearance of the vaccine has caused even more controversy among the population, especially in the online environment.

One thing as uncontrollable as the online environment is the crowd/collective actions. Authors such as Gustave Le Bon, Herbert Blumer, Gabriel Le Tarde, Sigmund Freud studied the psychology of crowds and how they influence human behaviour.

Collective behaviour is one of the most fascinating topics in sociology, as this term refers to various social phenomena such as: the behavioral interactions of fans in stadiums, strikes and riots, fashion, whims, rumours, and so on (Chazel, 1997: 320-323). Nobody plans how a collective action happens, but the most interesting thing is that all participants will behave in the same way, guided by the norm built by them.

In a mass action, a person uses "us" instead of “me”, his thoughts are perceived collectively: "let's do", "we oppose". In this sense, the personality of members is changing, becoming someone

new. Individual people are logical and rational, but in the presence of others, they change their behaviour, do not have the same behaviour in public or in private. (Moscovici, 1997: 68-72) Due to the excess of sociability in collective assemblies, people become emotionally charged. The emotional instinct is what governs them; their reactions become exacerbated, like hypnotic states. According to Serge Moscovici, these states are also found in religious manifestations, political gatherings, and crowds during concerts, music festivals, in forms of personality worship.

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 is a crisis situation because the population was neither morally nor socially prepared for such a context. Most people have been irrational: either accusing doctors of crime or launching conspiracy theories on social networks. Declaring a state of emergency, people had to stay in their homes, and that was the begging of the collective behaviours in the online environment.

Many social actions go beyond the dimension of rationality due to their unpredictable and spontaneous character. (Le Bon, 2019: 8) Most theoretical works from the socio-humanistic field say that rationality is what controls human behaviour. However, "the father of crowd psychology", Gustave Le Bon, states that: "*crowds are defined by impulsivity, being unable to think logically and exaggerated emotions*".

This topic is relevant because nowadays, when pandemic situation affects our thinking and our way to assimilate the information, people are facing with a difficult problem. They don't know the difference between a fake news and a true one. This lack of ability leads to conflict and creates different public opinions like pro and anti vaccine group people.

Social networks represent a battlefield when everyone can write, share, post, create content. They encourage each other, increasing their beliefs. Their predominant attitudes are: irony, aggression, hostility. The purpose of this paper is to find out what is the mechanism of influence in the online environment and how users choose to manifest.

The research questions that started this study are:

1. How people express themselves in online environment? How public opinion looks like in this environment?
2. How people express themselves in a crowd? How public opinion looks like in this environment?
3. What are the differences and the similarities between those environments?
4. Where people are more vulnerable to be manipulated? Physical or virtual?

Methodology

These research questions outlined the next hypothesis: "hysterical, social contagion exists in online environment as exists in the physical mass of people". In order to prove the hypothesis and to know the answers to the research questions, the current study uses 2 research methods developed a quantitative and a qualitative method.

Using a semi-structured interview, this paper obtained information about the users of Social Media Platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter): how collective actions (rumours, fashion, challenge) affects their attitude. Through the semi-structured interview guide I outlined 12 main questions and got 8 answers. The interviews were recorded through the Zoom Meeting platform and subsequently transcribed May 22-26.

The survey tool is the online questionnaire, which I applied through the Google Docs platform. There were 68 respondents and it was completed in 20-25 May 2020. The type of sampling was non-probabilistic, (convenience sampling), based on rational and voluntary selection of respondents. The questionnaire had 3 sections: in the first section, the respondent read the description of the questionnaire and implicitly the reason of this study. The second section contains 2 open-ended questions through which the respondents answered in one word, characterizing the information from the online environment. The last part contains a set of 28 questions, built like a "funnel". Through the survey, this paper obtained information about: credibility of news in social media, about the characteristics of social networks platform.

Results

Hypothesis: “hysterical, social contagion exists in online environment as exists in the physical mass of people” has been proven to be true.

The physical crowds, defined by Gustave Le Bon by: impulsiveness of actions, credulity of information, exaggeration of feelings and low moral principles are similar in these traits to the forms of collective behaviour in the online environment. The anonymity and dehumanization in the online environment, create a field where people can launch irrational theories and judgments, because when the source is not known, the information can be accentuated and distorted

One of the most interesting results is that a person behaves differently between real life and virtual/online life, but a mass of people acts the same way in real life and virtual life. Physical crowds are similar to the forms of collective behaviour in the online environment through: anonymity, contagion, accentuation of information and feelings. Also, this study discovered that these crises are building a ground for the development of fake news and an irrational mass-behaviour.

Conclusion

The situation generated by COVID-19 had different consequences in terms of public opinion for each social network. "Need to share" is the slogan that defines the online age in which we live. People tend to share not only important information, but also insignificant, niche details, often being just insights understood by a certain group of people. Facebook distributions shape public opinion. In the created questionnaire, 35% of respondents spend very little time creating a post on Facebook, thus creating a high flow of information. Also, 77% of respondents believe that everyone can create content is a bad thing. The effects of this flow of information, which increased during the global pandemic, lead to the most difficult management of verifying the validity of the information. The alarming pace of information distribution has increased exponentially with the spread of the virus, and under such conditions, online media have upset the population with the appearance of so called “breaking news”. People no longer have time to analyze one piece of information, because another appears, and this series continues, making it difficult to check the credibility. The very large amount of information is a manipulation factor, because in this way, fake news is leaked, difficult to interpret, and in the human minds are saved only shocking messages and those that contain unexpected, amazing news.

All kinds of conflicts appear in the posts, the attitude is defiant, ironic and aggressive. When there are many comments, people feel able to assert itself because also in that post exist similar statements. They encourage each other as in a crowd.

The limits of the methodology are sampling data, the possibility to erroneously select the respondents, the study was applied only in Romania and during the interview there were moments when the interviewees deviated from the subject.

A risk of the work is represented by the control of the situation, by the fact that we studied a phenomenon that happens in real time. An improvement of the paper is given by the use of the content analysis method. This will select relevant posts, number of likes, comments, patterns giving the work a more believable character.

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Psychological and Sociological Effects of Reading for Pleasure on Students (Cluj-Napoca, 2021)

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Beyond the fact that pleasure reading improves thinking skills and general literacy skills as: comprehension, vocabulary and verbal fluency, there are some important psychological benefits too (Howard, 2011). Thus, pleasure readers are empowered because they tend to have strong beliefs. They are more perceptive due to recognizing the danger of high risk behaviours and they see reading as a way of escaping from reality. In Vivian Howard's paper, there were exposed teenager's main reasons for choosing this activity: entertaining, escaping from routine, enhancing the imagination and personal reassurance. These reasons are connected to psychological benefits because the readers experience self-discovery and self-empowerment (Howard, 2011). The chosen topic is an interdisciplinary one due to the sociological and psychological elements presented in this paper. The motivation that stands for choosing this subject is connected to browsing another article realized by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy in 2011. There were revealed important aspects about reading for pleasure in Romania. One important aspect that requires to be presented is that only 26% from the surveyed individuals read for pleasure. Considering this information, this paper proposes to investigate if the situation has changed in the meantime. The psychological and sociological aspects that were previously mentioned help this research to investigate how the readers perceive this activity, what is the relation between reading and the states of mind and ultimately what kind of relation is between reading and the reader's economical background.

Eurostat undertook a study in 2018 that certify that European citizens spend less on books, newspapers and stationary. Slovakia is the leader in sharing of newspapers, books and stationary in total household expenditure (2,1%) and it is followed by Germany (1,6%) and Poland (1,4%). Bulgaria and Greece (both 0,6%), the Czech Republic, Spain and Malta (all 0,7%) are at the opposite end of the scale. A survey that covered the age group 20-74 shows that Europeans spend between two and thirteen minutes per day reading books. The citizens from Estonia, Finland and Hungary are reading the most in the Europe. The average time spent reading books in Romania is 5 minutes per day. When analysing the share of bookworms in Europe, Romania is one of the countries that have the lowest share respondents reading books (6,2%). Reading books is a main activity in Finland, Poland and Estonia (Eurostat, 2018)

The research questions are: why do students buy books? Which are the benefits of pleasure reading? Is there any difference between males and females in the behaviour of purchasing books? Is there any difference between males and females in the reading behaviour? When referring to psychological effects there is encapsulated the degree of entertainment, satisfaction, enthusiasm and self-esteem feels that appears when it comes to reading a book for pleasure in the spare time. Sociological effects refer to the ability of applying the models from the books in real life. Efficiency of communications is a sociological aspect as well which is related to pleasure reading. We researched these effects by applying a survey. The survey contains 31 items and it was sent on Facebook students' groups. Students from other faculties and departments share this survey on their student groups. The first question of this survey is a control question that facilitates the way we collect data only for the individuals that rely on reading as a way of relaxing in their free time. Considering the control question, 76,8% completed the whole survey. The minimum age of the participants is 18 years old and the maximum age is 36 years old. The percent of females that completed it is 84,5% whereas the percent of males that completed the survey is 15,5%. A considerable aspect is that 78,5% are from urban environment and only 21,5% are from rural.

Fiction, health/self-help books and biographies are the most widely read books by the students from Cluj-Napoca. The authors: Paul Coelho, Feodor Dostoievski, Jane Austen, Gabriel G. Marquez and F. Scott Fitzgerald are the most mentioned authors in this survey. It questioned how many books the students read in the last year, the financial allocations for purchasing books. Furthermore, it was also questioned where and for how long they read on a daily basis.

The results of this study attest that 88,9% from the surveyed individuals prefer hardcopy when they are in the circumstance of choosing between hardcopy and digital books. The fact that 45,8% read more than 4 books in the last year is gratifying. Moreover, the readers are cheerful and empathetic after resorting to this kind of activity. More than 48,85% enjoy sharing the content of a book and 37,7% agree that they succeed in discovering new social contacts because they speak about the latest book they read. According to the results, 52,5% of individuals who completed the survey agree that they have a good state of mind when they are in a library. It was proved that there is an interrelationship between reading for pleasure and psychosocial effects thus the research hypothesis has been validated. Not only that was found this interrelationship, but also the paper demonstrates that reading can facilitate the ability of creating new social groups. When readers are in the posture of choosing a new book, the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation helps them to decide in this way. This topic has a great impact not only in the Romanian society, but also in the entire European Union. Finding out the students' favorite authors and books and the relation between pleasure reading and psychosocial effects are the next research hypotheses proposed. Thereby, a future study would be relevant if it can be questioned students from all the Romanian universities.

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Covid-19 Anxiety in Relation with Conspiracy Theories and Religiosity

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This purpose of this research is to look at the relationship between anxiety as a personality disorder, anxiety about Covid-19, conspiracy theories, and other factors such as sources of information and religiosity. I decided to study this topic due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic which brought a lot of fear, anxiety, conspiratorial thinking but also many unknown factors. Not only people who already had mental health problems, but the majority of the people faced anxiety in different forms – all this being catalyzed by the measures imposed by the authorities to combat this global problem (Khan, 2020). The uncertainty and lack of control generated by this situation, isolation and other factors have led to the fabrication and embracing of conspiracy theories about SARS-Cov-2 - theories that have been widely spread by their followers and also by those who began to pursue them (Douglas, 2017). Social media has been the main channel through which conspiracy theories and false news have circulated, making especially young people vulnerable, because they are the ones who have an increased presence on social platforms (Allington, 2020). The spreading rate of false information has been high because people have a desire to be the first to find out and distribute the "truth" about the virus, and this makes the circulation of conspiracy theories run faster (Khan, 2020). Therefore, the confusion about what is real or false, the anxiety about the pandemic and the desire to observe the psychosocial profile of the conspirators motivated this research.

These scientific studies started from the following research questions:

RQ1: How does believing in conspiracy theories influence coronavirus anxiety?

RQ2: Is the level of religiosity correlated with believing in conspiracy theories?

RQ3: What are the predominant sources of information for people who are anxious about Covid-19?

RQ4: Do women in the 18-29 age group believe more in conspiracy theories than men?

According to the research questions, four research hypotheses were formed:

H1: Those who have anxiety as a personality trait have a higher level of faith in conspiracy theories.

H2: Those who watch the news about the coronavirus pandemic on the predominant social platforms show anxiety towards Covid-19 virus.

H3: Those who believe in conspiracy theories about Covid-19 have a below average level of education.

H4: Those who believe in conspiracy theories about Covid-19 have a higher degree of religiosity.

In order to examine these variables on young people in Romania, the sociological survey in the form of an online questionnaire was the most appropriate method. The questionnaire included 4 measurement scales: the anxiety scale as a personality trait (*The 30 NEO-PI-R Facet Scales* (Goldberg et al., 2006)), *The COVID-19 information sources identification scale* (Allington, The COVID-19 information sources identification scale, 2020), *Coronavirus Anxiety Scale* (Lee, 2020) and *The COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs scale* (The COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs scale, 2020).

Other important questions concerned the religiosity of the participants, this factor being considered. This questionnaire targeted the population of emerging young people (Arnett, 2014) and collected a number of 150 responses.

The analysis of the results showed that there is no link between anxiety as a personality trait and conspiracy beliefs in the target group. Therefore, the first research question has a non-answer and the first hypothesis was refuted. Instead, those who use social platforms to find out about the pandemic show anxiety about Covid-19- this confirms the second hypothesis. Facebook and Twitter were the predominant sources of those with anxiety about the virus.

Conspiracy theories were not influenced by the low level of education of the respondents, but it was shown that a higher level of religiosity is correlated with conspiracy beliefs about Covid-19. Thus, the third hypothesis was invalidated, and the fourth hypothesis was confirmed. Regarding the gender of the participants, there was no difference between women and men in terms of conspiracy belief but a difference on this element was seen between those who are married and those who are not. Previous research has shown that women are more prone to anxiety (Bourne, 2019) and this fact was confirmed in the present analysis.

This study had some limitations that need to be mentioned. A first limit would be represented by the small number of respondents and also the possible insincerity in completing the questionnaire (completing it in the online environment can be a contributing factor). The fact that the number of women was much higher than that of the men surveyed is another factor that should be mentioned as a limit. It is necessary to mention the homogeneity of the sample - being very many students - but also in terms of several factors (such as religiosity, education, background and marital status) as a minus of research. The non-detailing of the religiosity factor (religious denomination, the size of the religious group they attend, what they mean by the religious term, how often they go to religious services) needs to be specified as a limit of research.

Following a previous research, we noticed that no study has been done in Romania on the relationship between conspiracy theories about Covid-19 and anxiety in emerging adults (Arnett, 2014), as well as the influence of religiosity on conspiracy beliefs. Hence, the present research will be the first to analyze, among young Romanians, the relationship between anxiety as a trait and conspiracy beliefs about Covid-19, the sources of information associated with anxiety about coronavirus and the way religiosity is correlated with conspiracy beliefs. Finding out the factors that determine the belief in conspiracy theories and anxiety about Covid-19 are relevant elements for the pandemic we are going through. These factors contribute to observing the psychological profile of people affected by these things and finding solutions to help them. Also, through the scales used, the study generates scientific data that strengthen or not the existing researches. Finding the source of information about Covid-19 in this age group provides data for the public mental health information campaigns and strategies to counter the spread of false news and conspiracy theories on these platforms.

As future research directions, we recommend to study more deeply the relationship between the religiosity factor (for example: the differences between denominations) and conspiracy beliefs in order to determine what link to the religious factor determines this connection. Another thing that can be investigated more closely is the relationship between marital status and conspiracy theories.

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The Influence of Applying the Code of Good Manners in Writing a Mail on the Perception of the Expeditor

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This study aims at analyzing the use of email as a means of communication, in accordance with good manners. The research aims to discover the opinion of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences students on the concept of netiquette (the rules that guide an individual how to behave properly on the internet) and how much its application can influence their impression of the sender of the message. In order to achieve this goal, the study's subjects, in total of approximately 70, were chosen from a number of specializations of the faculty mentioned before, of different ages, constituting an unrepresentative sample. As for the methods used in this paper were the indirect sociological survey, with the specific questionnaire and quasi-experiment tool, which consisted in organizing a focus group to get qualitative answers. Following the interpretation of the data collected, the study's conclusion revealed that although not all students frequently apply good manners when sending an email, they can easily recognize their presence or absence. In addition, the style of writing of an email may indicate certain personality features and clues as to the status of the person who wrote it.

Introduction

Throughout the years, communication between students and teachers takes place both face to face during study hours and, after that, through a platform to get more additional information if needed. In general, the platform for continuing the communication after the courses is a mail-type one, as it is more formal in nature, where manners are usually kept so that the professional teacher-student relationship can be maintained. The fact that the planet is going through a pandemic has limited the direct communication between students and teachers mainly through emails.

Even though the world's evolution is characterised by an overwhelming speed, the manners haven't suffered any change because of their atemporal aspect and because they are based on simple principles. At the same time, this conduct is not only present in real life, but also present in the online environment, through various devices that give us the chance of unlimited communication, which Aurelia Marinescu (1996) says is the right place to cause social blunders. This is the moment when "netiquette" intervenes, the good Internet manners that are urgently needed to maintain cyber politeness that does not violate the rules of common respect for interacting people. Another study published on the 29th of January 2021 presented a series of results that concluded with the fact that, in theory, using the email correctly "is revealed through the presentation of guidelines and guides" (Soler-Costa, 2021).

Generally speaking, compliance with the netiquette rules is associated with reducing Internet aggression. Peter K. Smith defines Internet aggression, also known as cyberbullying, as "an

aggressive and intentional act by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and gradually against a victim who cannot defend himself or herself easily.” (Smith et al., 2008). In the paper entitled “Netiquette in Electronic Communication”, in conclusion it is presented how important is “to put more emphasis on studying netiquette than before” believing that it should be part of “general education and has its place in curricula not only in technical field” (Kozik & Silvova, 2014).

Our research is aimed at the perception of students in respect of good manners in online communication, carried out through email. The study intends to submit the analysis of the aspects that the subjects consider when writing an email, but also the extent to which the style of writing can influence their opinion about the sender. The research question which from the study started is: “What is the importance of students from the Faculty of Political Sciences, Administrative Sciences and the Communication of the rules of Conduct for e-mail communication?”

Methodology

In order to find out if the netiquette is relevant for the students from the faculty chosen, we used as methods of research the indirect sociological survey, using the questionnaire and the quasi-experiment as a tool, in which we have integrated a group-photo to explore participants' views. We have chosen these methods because of economic advantages, which do not involve costs, but also of relatively short time, accessibility and quality of the data obtained. The research wishes to assert or refute the following assumptions:

H1. Most people are aware of mistakes such as grammar mistakes or missing politeness formulas in mail.

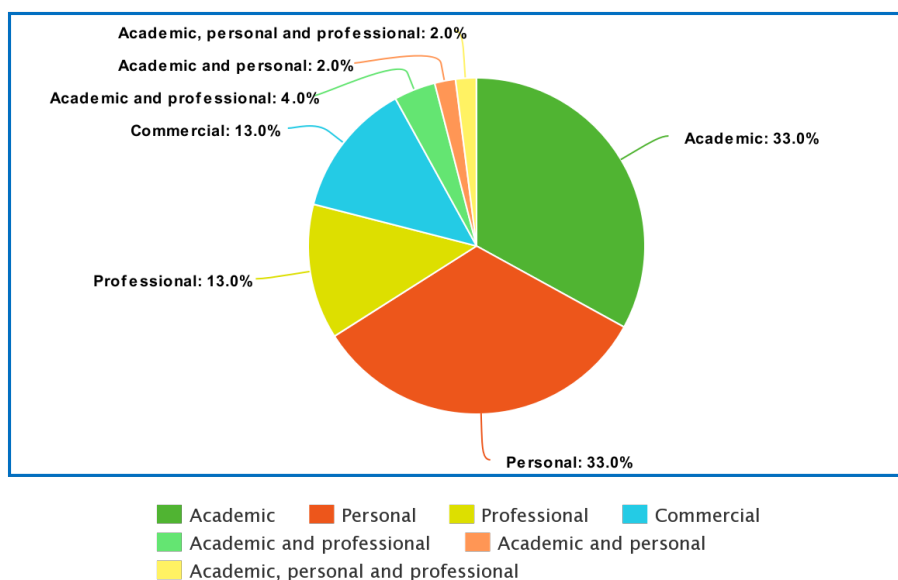
H2. The better the code of good manners is applied in communication by FSPAC students via email, the more positively the perspective of the receiver on them.

H3. FSPAC students are actively using the guidelines of netiquette but they don't know that aspects like completing the subject field or using introduction and end formulas are part of the internet conduct.

The research was carried out on 54 students of the Faculty of political, Administrative and Communication Sciences at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, from the bachelor, master and PhD level. The survey's average age of the subjects is 21 years, the younger subject being 18 years old and the oldest being 25 years old, the majority was made of female subjects (68%) and most of our respondents come from an urban environment (77%).

Results

Following the interpretation of the data obtained with the help of the sociological survey, we validated 54 questionnaires completed by students from the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences. 85% of the respondents use mail as a means of communication and 94% agree with the idea of the applicability of the code of good manners on the email. The majority of them declared that they use the email occasionally (46%), but they are checking the inbox daily (40%). They declared that they use the email for academic (33%) and personal (33%) reasons.



Also relevant for the subject is the fact that they use email mostly to communicate to communicate with people from the university field (92%). Even though the respondents believe that the way an email is drafted has a lot of influence on the opinion of the expeditor (48%), most of them didn't know that aspects such as completing the subject field or signing at the end of the email are part of the netiquette (67%).

As for the quasi-experiment, it was made up of three stages starting with the presentation of a neutral email described by students as a standard email and that they sent this type of email before. After that, the group was randomly divided into two groups, approximately equal in terms of number of participants.

In the first group, the same principle of interpreting a mail, used previously, was followed, but this time one of these mails was written in breach of all the writing rules regarding the code of good online manners. The students agreed that the writer of the email had no experience in sending emails judging by the grammar mistakes and no introduction and ending formulas. After a brief debate on the possibility of motivations to justify the way such a mail is written, the participants decided that, regardless of the context, a student was not entitled to make out his discontents in this way.

In parallel to this focus group, a second took place in which the participants were shown a fictitious mail, written using all the correct writing rules in writing the mail. To see the impact of the code of good manners in the mail, the same set of questions-applied to the previous mail-was used. This email was described by the subjects as "completely different", „more serious, more formal" than the neutral one and, indeed, appropriate for sending it to a professor. When asked if they would send a similar email, half of them responded affirmative, while the other half said that "I would use an academic language, but not so much, [...] I would lead to the limit of common sense of formal".

To conclude this experiment, the groups were brought back together and showed them both of the mails that were being discussed. After a long discussion about the differences noticed, one student concluded "Mail is a form of writing in the academic world and being you does not reflect 100% what you write."

Conclusion

From the results interpreted above, we can note that most young people know the rules of the label in writing a mail, and moreover, they are actively applying them. Although the results show that they would also make mistakes that do not respect the code of good manners in writing an email, they still note the importance of respecting some rules in this kind of communication. From the results of the quasi-experiment, it appears that young people are influenced by the

relationship with the recipient when considering a correct, labeled writing of a mail. Given the hypothesis that "the better the code of good manners is applied in the communication by the FSPAC students via email, the more positively the perspective of the receiver on them.", it was shown that the correctness of the mail writing being the only variable, young people tend to form a positive opinion of a person who writes an email respecting the netiquette.

It is important to note that this work is selective and has certain limitations. For example, the target group was chosen under the criterion of membership of a single faculty in Cluj-Napoca, and only a small group of people participated from the total number of students, so the results of this study cannot be extended. In the context of the purely online environment of the almost inexperienced, an analysis of the non-verbal communication of the participants could not be carried out. In order for the results of a study that addresses this issue to be significant, we suggest that future researchers extend the application of the methods to a greater number of people.

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The Impediments of Professional Ascension of Students in Cluj-Napoca

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This paper aims to follow the perception of students in Cluj-Napoca on the labour market, respectively the importance of the academic training offered by the study program for which they have opted. Thus, students belonging to several university centers will be evaluated, wanting to be established differences of their mentality, depending on the chosen specialization. In addition, the project aims to assess the need for personal development for professional success, highlighting the awareness of young students on habits and attitudes harmful to performance in study and career. The research also captures certain extracurricular activities embraced by students, in order to conclude their perspective on the relationship between faculty requirements and other individual concerns. Conducted in two stages, the research provides both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the hypotheses which I've proposed, concluding that students in Cluj-Napoca have different visions on the potential for professional ascension, depending on the field in which they wish to operate or other subjective considerations of them. Therefore, the paper finally sets out a series of recommendations aimed at forming a productive activity during the years of study, i.e. integration accessible to the Romanian labour market.

Introduction

In a world where the socio-economic situation varies according to the context generated by various factors of influence in the development of any state, we consider the perspective, among teenagers of Romania, on the labour market of particular importance, their integration into the economic mechanism of the state being beneficial both individually and socially.

The conclusions and interpretations are devoted, in particular, to the documentation carried out in advance, which wished to assess general views on the labour market and the offers related to the specialisation of students. A project carried out in the Republic of Moldova indicates that a small percentage of students feel confident that they can work in a field related to their specialization (Garbuz, Rojco, 2017, 260), while another study explains how Romanian law presupposes the existence of specialised education and career counselling centres, the vision of which is nevertheless reduced. (Cojocaru, Orel, Popp, 2010, 220) Starting from these studies, my article has the objective to evaluate students' mentalities, in order to understand how they judge their future based on the motivation to practise in the chosen field.

In addition to these, I have also evaluated a number of mechanisms that give a young student the opportunity to increase their enthusiasm for the tasks of his specialization, these processes resulting in an increase in its productivity, materialized in concrete results. However, the main analysis develops on those habits that can disrupt a young person's path to success, the conclusions leading to their avoidance. (Vihocenco, 2015, 167)

Methodology

Based on a number of five hypotheses, the validation of which is pursued throughout the project, the paper contains both a quantitative and a qualitative method of evaluation, so that the study benefits from the best-argued and exemplified perspectives.

H1: The more concrete a student's perspective for the future, the more likely success, defined in a subjective manner, is.

H2: The more the majority of activities that a student opts for do not concern the interests of the faculty or of his own specialization, the less the professional success is diminished.

H3: The greater the interests of young people in Cluj-Napoca on extra-curricular activities, the greater the likelihood of performance in the study.

H4: If students in Cluj-Napoca embrace habits harmful to mental health, then the yield in the field of activity diminishes significantly.

H5: Most students in Cluj-Napoca find a balance between study and relaxation.

At first instance, I have provided the 87 students evaluated, belonging to the various university centers in Cluj-Napoca, with a questionnaire containing questions referring to the main questions of the paper, such as, “What factors influence interest in success in the future field of activity?” or “What are the most prevalent habits that disrupt young people on the road to success?” with the aim of quantitatively, general evaluation of their vision. The interpretation of the data will show us similarities and differences in the perspectives of students from different specializations.

However, for the best possible representativeness of the quantitative responses, I have also conducted a series of ten individual interviews with students with varied specialisations, assessing how or not they confirm the general conclusions initially obtained.

Results

The most relevant results from the questionnaire demonstrate that 70.6% of respondents consider that they have a considerable chance of practising in the field for which they have opted in the faculty, while 76% assess, as the main threat to labour market integration, the lack of jobs and high competition between employees.

Moreover, the results of the questionnaire indicate that students believe that vices, entourages, unhealthy lifestyles have a considerable influence for professional success, with few saying that they have considered turning to the career counselling centres of their universities. Last but not least, the results show that the time available to students in Cluj-Napoca is largely dedicated to the faculty, 40% of whom consider that they need an additional recreational activity.

As regards individual interviews, the most interesting aspect that emerges from them is the specific differences in mentality and vision of students belonging to different specializations, some of the most relevant being on the perspective that defines an academically fulfilled life, the visible threats in the labour market or the passion for the chosen field. For a specific example, students from specializations such as law school or public relations find themselves more optimistic about the future in the labour market, while students from engineering profiles believe that they have to face a higher competition in order to gain the achievements they want. Also, I have discovered that students from art schools think that it is crucial for them to find a job during the period of studying, while students from medical schools feel that it is more important to focus them on learning, instead of trying to find opportunities of practicing in those years.

Conclusion

I believe that the greatest benefit of this study is represented by the differences that I managed to highlight as studying students from different specializations. The general idea of the conclusion that this study provides is that, depending on the field that his future job is a part of, a student develops a specific vision for his activities during the years of studying and also for the possibilities that he evaluates as joining the labour market after he finishes his studies. All of these perspectives are analyzed in the project, where even students try to explain why they have a different opinion that different from the others' one.

Moreover, we find that students don't have a specific incentive to make progress in developing their mental health and their motivation, even if they understand that it is very important to maintain their productivity high, in order to achieve better results and to prepare themselves for the transition to the labour market. Thus, I have also highlighted a few recommendations for those who are interested in my study, based on the problematic situations that I have seen during this research work.

As mentioned above, my work can form the basis of other research carried out on the same topic of interest, the orientation of students towards their own career, their productivity being necessary to be seen as a priority of our education systems.

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Owning a Pet Influences the Emotional Intelligence

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It can be noticed that many people around us either own a pet or choose not to own one by many reasons like allergies and lack of time. Focusing on people who own a pet we have a question: What benefits can they get from having a pet? Emotional intelligence (EQ) is not an unknown element, but many people do not know exactly what it means. Everyday, our emotions govern our actions without realizing and we don't often see their impact on our interpersonal relationships.

Starting from two concepts that at first glance are not related, we still have a curiosity: Does owning a pet influence emotional intelligence? Making a distinction between people who own and those who do not own a pet, I hope that at the end of this research I will reach a general conclusion. If you have a pet, over time, you manage to gain better understanding of your emotions and improve your relationships with people. The paper also wants to show if there is an age difference between emotional intelligence and empathy in people who own a pet.

In a rigorous search through scientific articles in this domain, I have not found studies that focus on this perspective. I hope that in the future, we will expand this perspective and encourage others to continue the research on a larger scale. My sample consists of 112 respondents, 106 women and only 6 men, which are living in Cluj Napoca. I used two research methods, the sociological survey, using the questionnaire as a tool, and the interview.

There are many possible definitions of emotional intelligence (EQ). Many of these come from popularization of EQ found in the press and popular books. However, there is a clear and scientifically useful definition that is recognized because it takes the terms emotions and intelligence seriously. Finally, we define EQ as the ability to reason about emotions and use emotions to enhance thinking. This includes the ability to accurately perceive emotions, access and generate emotions to help thinking understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflect emotions in order to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004, 197). Another definition: EQ refers to the ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, to reason and solve the problems with them. EQ is involved in the ability to perceive emotions, to assimilate feelings related to emotions, to understand the informations of these emotions and to manage them (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 1999, 267).

To understand the concept of emotional intelligence we use the four-branch model that describes four areas of ability/aptitudes. This model defines emotional intelligence involving the ability to accurately perceive yours and others' emotions to facilitate thinking, understand emotional meanings and manage emotions (Mayer, 2004).

The five components, according to Goleman's (1996) model of emotional intelligence are: self-awareness, self-regulations, internal motivation, empathy which is the ability to understand the non-verbal behavior and facial expressions of others and the ability to treat people according to their emotional reactions, and social skills.

Pets can provide a number of benefits for humans, including the opportunity to have physical contact with another soul. Researchers have found that some pet owners are associated with a host of health benefits, including a 1-year increased survival rate in those who have suffered a heart attack and lower blood pressure which is a response to psychological stress (Friedmann & Thomas, 1995; Allen, Shykoff & Izzo, 2001).

Pets can enhance social interactions with others, providing an indirect effect on well-being. Social contact has been recognized as beneficial in alleviating feelings of loneliness and social

isolation. Pets undoubtedly act as “social catalysts”, leading to greater social contact between people (McNicholas & Murray, 2005). The benefits of pet owners range from understanding the behavior of the animal (Inagaki, 1990), more positive attitudes (Bjerke, Ost Dahl & Kleiven, 2003) and better health (Serpell, 1991). Serpell (1991) studied that cats and dogs provide significant improvements in adult physical and mental health compared to those who do not own such animals.

This paper assumes that people who own a pet have a higher emotional intelligence (H1), respectively empathy (H2) than people who do not own a pet. People aged 18-30 who own a pet show higher emotional intelligence (H3) and empathy (H4) than people aged 45-60 who own a pet. The women aged 18-30 who own a pet have a higher emotional intelligence than men.

The first research method is the sociological survey, using the online questionnaire as a tool. This questionnaire was created and distributed with the Microsoft Forms platform. In this questionnaire was included questions that help me find out whether or not the respondent has pets and what kind, data on the age and sex. Also, in the questionnaire were introduced 2 summative scales. The first scale used is The Assessing Emotions Scale developed by Schutte, Mallouf & Bhullar (2009) through which we find out the general level of emotional intelligence of the respondent. The second scale is used to measure empathy and is actually a subscale from Cloninger's Inventory of Temperament and Character (Iliescu, Popa & Dimache, 2005). The items for each scale were evaluated on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 and they had to select an answer that was generally valid for them.

The independent variable is whether or not to have a pet, and the dependent variable is emotional intelligence, respectively empathy. To calculate the effect size for 2 independent samples I will use the t test for independent samples. For those calculations I will need the average of the dependent variable for each group of subjects, the standard deviation and the number of subjects in each group formed. I will calculate the mean and standard deviation, as well as the effect size, using the IBM SPSS Statistics program.

The second research method used was the interview. It was supported on the Zoom Meeting platform. I use the standardized, directed and structured interview, which means I used the same questions for all subjects, in the same order and form. The questions were focused on the personal opinion of the subjects about emotional intelligence, if they know this term, what it means and if they think that concept is influenced by the fact that a person own or does not own a pet.

For the first hypothesis the paper reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between people who own a pet and those who don't. In conclusion, we can say that people who own a pet have a higher emotional intelligence than people who do not own a pet. According to the calculations for the difference in samples: people who have a pet and those who do not have a pet between the ages of 18-30, for the empathy there is no statistically significant difference, so otherwise we can say that the hypothesis is refuted. In conclusion, there is no influence on the empathy owning a pet or not. The third hypothesis if I had reformulated in reverse, a confirmed hypothesis would have emerged. However, we can say that people aged 18-30 who own a pet have lower emotional intelligence than people aged 45-60 who own a pet. The fourth hypothesis is also refuted, so in conclusion we deduce that there is no significant difference in the level of empathy between the two samples. Due to the fact that we don't have a significant number of male subjects, the fifth hypothesis does not make sense to be calculated and interpreted.

Before applying the interview, we expected there to be a difference between people who do not own an animal and those who does. But contrary to my expectations, whether people own a pet or not, they have similar points of view on the fact that an animal positively influences people's lives, and that there are differences in the development of empathy and emotional intelligence.

The evaluation scales used in the questionnaire, according to the literature, have an increased validity and fidelity, but there may be sources of errors, originating in the answer's errors: the respondents hid their answers, gave an expected answer or gave a random answer. The limits of the interview were the errors due to the interviewers in terms of asking questions or recording them. Open-ended questions considerably limit the generalization and comparison of results.

The limitations of the study are represented by the low number of subjects and the uneven distribution based on gender and age. Another limitation is the difference in the numbers of subjects between the groups. This result cannot be extrapolated to all the population of the city due to the low number of participants. In accordance with the literature studied at the beginning of the paper, we can say that there are improvements in mental health of the people who own a pet. This research is an addition of knowledge in this domain, with new and unapproached elements.

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Anxiety Among Students from Cluj-Napoca

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Young people's mental health has become an increasingly discussed topic nowadays. This paper aims to find out the main causes of anxiety, how it manifests itself, and methods to reduce it. Unlike other previous studies on the same topic, our research highlights how the pandemic affected the academic life of the students. The research methods used are the social investigation and the interview, both conducted online, which obtained both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 140 people took part in the survey and 13 people took part in the interview, representing different years of study and faculties in Cluj-Napoca. The study started from the hypothesis that academic life is one of the main causes of anxiety for students. Results showed that although the students live in constant anxiety, state professional help is not the most popular choice for reducing anxiety and the main activities which trigger this state are exams, projects, oral presentations, and turning on the camera for the online classes.

Introduction

What are the effects of the students' anxiety from Cluj-Napoca in the year 2020? More precisely, how is the academic life influenced by it and how can the students manage to control their anxiety in the year of the COVID-19 pandemic? The present paper contains the answers to these questions in a detailed form with scientific evidence and various research methods to support them.

Motivation

Numerous studies have shown that students are the ones who are most affected by anxiety because they "are so vulnerable to mental health problems that it has become a significant concern for many societies." (Manthorpe, 2001 in Qaisy, 2011: 96). In Romania, to this day, there are many people that consider anxiety and depression a tabu subject, so the paper's main purpose was to examine how a mental health problem affects the day-to-day lives of Cluj Napoca students, with a focus on their academic life. Some recent research focused on Romanian youths and reported that anxiety strikes most of them around the age of 17 (Florescu, 2009), and that many of them grow up unaware that they are suffering from it, as Dr. Ancuța Pinteș revealed in a study in which nearly half of the 88 participants (42.3%), between the ages of 19-32, displayed anxiety symptoms (Pinteș, 2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic is a factor that has not been established in other studies before and here plays an important role, and since we wanted to collect as much knowledge as possible, the current topic was approached both quantitatively and qualitatively, using different research methods.

Methodology

The main goal of this study is to look into anxiety among Cluj-Napoca students. Not only qualitative methods (sociological survey) but also quantitative methods (survey) were used to collect the required data (sociological interview-semi structured). All information gathered has confidential character. The main hypothesis is: 'The anxiety of students from Cluj-Napoca has the main cause of academic life'. Furthermore, the following research questions were used in this study: 'How does anxiety affect student life in Cluj-Napoca in 2020?', 'How does anxiety manifest in academic life?', and 'How do students handle their anxiety?'.

The questionnaire was created using 'Google Forms,' has twenty-three questions and has been circulated online for two weeks, in Facebook groups for students. After two weeks, 140 people have replied, with 117 women and 23 men taking part. Urban areas account for 64.3% of the participants, while rural areas account for 35.7 %. Moreover, 99.3% of them study at *Babes-Bolyai University* and 0.7% study at *Gheorghe Dima National Music Academy*. They were from fifteen of *Babes-Bolyai University's* total of 22 faculties. Individual interviews were conducted via ZOOM, with five questions and thirteen participants. The participants were not selected at random; instead, they were chosen from among our friends. As a result, our interview is not very accurate. The questions were posed in order to elicit personal and rational viewpoints. However, we tried to select participants from both sexes and from different faculties.

Another point worth mentioning is that our study has certain limitations, such as a small number of participants. Furthermore, the paper can contain errors caused by the questionnaire's construction and/or the subjects (regarding their honesty which cannot be controlled). Also, due to our lack of experience, there may be errors in the interpretation of the findings and their presentation in this paper.

This research was addressed only for people who study in Cluj-Napoca and took place between 14th of November 2020 and 8th of December 2020 exclusively online.

Data

For the quantitative side of the paper, a questionnaire was administered to 140 subjects between the ages of 18-25. The participants were 83.6% women and 16.4% men, including both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The questionnaire aims to find common anxiety symptoms, how severe are its effects, how and if the university life increases anxiety and how the students cope with it. The results were what we expected, 75.7% of the participants responded that they feel anxious most of the time and it has been indicated that most common signs of anxiety are: fear, difficulty concentrating and rapid fatigue. The tasks that increased their anxiety include: giving a presentation, when the teacher calls their name and asking questions. An interesting fact was that most of them prefer to talk to a close friend or parent rather than a psychologist.

Seeking to uncover the qualitative side of the theme, we interviewed 13 people, who did not complete the questionnaire. The participants were subjected to five questions that were intended to find out whether anxiety was triggered or amplified when they started university, if the pandemic and online education has increased their anxiety and how can the University help. Based on their responses, both similarities and differences of opinion were discovered after collecting and analyzing the data. It was interesting to observe that 6 students claimed that their anxiety increased with the start of university, 5 claimed it remained the same, and 2 said that their anxiety was reduced due to a new start. While most subjects believe that online education has only worsened their anxiety, a small proportion believes that the online environment has helped them in reducing their anxiety. To alleviate anxiety, the majority suggested engaging in personal growth and socialization activities, as well as making the Faculty's psychologist accessible to students during the pandemic.

The major advantage of these data lies with the similarities between the results of the research methods, such as: how online education makes the students feel, their fears and their

coping mechanisms.

Conclusion

Following this study, it was discovered that the majority of Cluj-Napoca students suffer from academic anxiety. The results of the study support the hypothesis and show that anxiety has a negative impact on students' academic performance. Furthermore, the findings address the study questions. As a result, the answer to the question "How does anxiety impact students?" is that the subjects are unable to achieve their full potential because they exhibit a hesitant behavior. The next question, looking at how does anxiety express itself in academia, yielded mixed results; for some, university life has increased anxiety, while for others it has decreased. The last question, "How do students handle their anxiety?" yielded a wide range of responses, but the most common solutions were talking to a loved one, breathing exercises, and positive thinking. The present study revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic had both positive and negative effects over the subjects' anxiety. Another significant aspect that has been found is that most choose not to seek specialized help, therapy being an option for a minority of those studied. Based on the limits of the paper, further research perspectives should be developed.

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The Effects of Multiple Source Digital Information on Social Perception in Romania.

Case study on Generation X (1965-1980)

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The digital era in which we live nowadays is found in every action we take in our daily lives transforming the classic way of getting informed in a universe of digital platforms. Along with the multiplication and the rapid steps we followed towards technological evolution we encountered different barriers not only in terms of social perceptions but also in the approach of many sources of information. Social media platforms get people together, creating various online communities which have as a target the user. We are so accustomed to the existence of technology and its use that we may not notice the way it overwhelms some of us who only out of the illusory desire to keep up with everything that is happening end up experiencing negative feelings. The effects of using all these social platforms take various forms, some of them with a negative impact like becoming dependent on use. The present study is both a qualitative and quantitative approach involving three focus groups (women, men and mixed) and the sociological survey which had 108 respondents both being applied to individuals aged between 40 and 56 years old and who are part of the generation x, both men and women. This analysis helped to identify the current perception of generation x from Romania regarding the approach to multiple sources of information and the opinions they have in view of the skills needed in order to use them. Moreover, the analysis checked the way in which the information era is perceived from a cultural and historical perspective, following the connection between the communist period in which they grew up and the present.

Introduction

The expansion of new media in Romania is represented by new trends in approaching multiple sources of information, both offline and especially online. Although the human being has one of the most important skills, in the universe of digital platforms adaptation is only a part of the whole.

The motivation for choosing the topic was an intrinsic one, which was based on the direct and indirect observation (for two years) of people from X generation who experience the use of social platforms in Romania. At the same time, curiosity led to the interest in drawing a connection between the media during the communist period and the present. Given the emotions and experiences that those of X generation have acquired since then.

The present paper was outlined following the analysis on the secondary data, and the hypotheses and research questions will be established. According to them, the empirical part of the study focused on two research methods: the sociological survey and the group interview. The latter helped to collect the primary data in order to verify the hypotheses and answer the previously established research questions. The hypotheses of the paper and the research questions are:

H1. The more technology becomes more present in the daily life of individuals, the more the use of multiple social information platforms will overwhelm the perceptions of X generation in Romania;

H2. If the approach of different social platforms is so used during a day, then in order to their usage them a set of skills (aptitudes) is needed.

Q1. Are there differences in perception among X generation on how to inform?

Q2. How is the information age perceived by X generation in Romania?

The two hypotheses followed both the opinions and attitudes of those in X generation regarding the use of social platforms, and whether certain skills are needed when these platforms are used. On the other hand, the research questions followed the dichotomy of the participants from the three focus groups, respectively whether there are gender-based differentiating elements. At the same time, they followed the way in which this difference ends up, in the end, by give us an overview of the X generation in Romania in terms of technology and information, but also how it is perceived in the information age. The experiences that the subjects had during the communist period were considered making a parallel with the present.

The elements that differentiate this research from other studies are the following: trying to understand how the subjects grew up and how those memories manifest in the information age regarding the social platforms, and the focus on the X generation in Romania in order to use technology.

What is known about the informational era?

Regarding technological development and the global Internet network, they cover more than 70% of the Earth's territory (Yury & Samoylova, 2017). The authors mention that technological evolution has brought with it the possibility to connect various things in a single network and that, with this evolution, a new phenomenon has appeared: the Internet of Things (Yury & Samoylova, 2017), where anything can be connected to a single network.

Professor Manuel Castells (1996-1998; 2011) has shown us, over time, through his research and studies that we are witnessing a new form of capitalism: information capitalism, which is based on knowledge and information technology. In one of his important works, Castells (1996-1998; 2011) identified a transformation of the world dominated by physical spaces, which are represented by states and organizations; in a world characterized by flows like information, products and people that take place in those physical spaces with a global effect. (Castells, 1996-1998; 2011)

Methodology

In the first method, the survey was self-administered online on a sample of 108 respondents, aged between 40 and 56 years. The second method included three focus groups, one for women, one for men and one mixed, with four participants in each, aged between 47 and 56 years.

The sociological survey

Most X generation respondents prefer to use technology and also trust it. Thus, 93,5% (101 people) own a smartphone, 73,1% (79 people) own a laptop and smart TV, 55,6% (60 people) computer, 42,6% (46 people) has tablet, 22,2% (24 people) own a smartwatch, and 3,6% (four people) other devices, such as: recorder, microphone, video camera, fitness bracelet, digital scale and automatic vacuum cleaner.

When it comes to using platforms as sources of information, X generation prefers Google 96,3% (104 people). The following platforms are quite close, Facebook 63,9% (69 people), TV 63% (68 people), YouTube 57,4% (62 people), followed by other offline sources, such as: radio, newspaper, books, magazines, but also other news platforms like Biziday, CNN, BBC News, Microsoft Edge, WhatsApp, even Netflix.

Mainly, most of the respondents use between three and four sources of information per day respectively 42,6% (46 people), followed immediately by those who approach one or two sources 37% (40 people), and 20,4% (22 people) use over five sources daily.

To the question *"To what extent do you agree with the following skills that a user should have when coming into contact with information sources?"*, they tended to answer *"Total agreement"*. In the same context, ask *"To what extent do you consider that these skills are needed to use information platforms?"*, the tendency of the answers was, again, to a total agreement extent 82,4%.

The focus-groups

In the first focus-group, the female one, the tendency of the answers and attitudes was very nostalgic and even romantic towards the period of the communism. Even if the access to information was reduced, the participants did not experience this negatively, but adapted and lived the moments of childhood with joy and ecstasy. Studies have shown that women are more likely to be addicted to technology than men.

In the second focus-group, made up of the male side, attitudes and opinions were directed towards the less pleasant part of the media, respectively towards censorship and manipulation, both from the media during the communist period and now. The tendencies of the answers from the male part of study were directed more towards distrust, suspicion and reluctance towards what it means to inform the Romanian society.

In the third group, the mixed one, the trends were the same, both among women and men. From the dynamics of the mixed group we were able to draw an overview between the dichotomies of the two genders. The participants completed each other's sentences, entering into dialogue both women with slightly nuanced opinions and men with suspicion of technology and information.

Both women and men use social information platforms out of personal need, but especially professional. At the same time, all 12 participants consider it essential to analyze and verify the sources they access to get information. They are not so interested about technological developments to keep up with developments in this field, but they are open to them and embrace technology especially in facilitating the administrative field.

Conclusion

Following the literature, an overview of the information age and social perceptions of a community emerged. The results obtained, both in the literature and in the empirical part, proved to be interconnected, thus obtaining a logical narrative continuity in the scientific approach.

The empirical results confirm the hypotheses, showing that the people of X generation in Romania feel complex of technology when they have to use several social platforms daily to get information. At the same time, more than half of the respondents acknowledge that a set of digital skills is needed when using these platforms. In this case, the research questions sought to supplement the hypotheses.

The element that makes the difference in the Romanian perception is the way in which people experience certain situations over time. The experiences they had as children can be influenced by their opinion of the digital age and the new generations.

Growing up in the communism, X generation inherited uncertainty, suspicion and fear of change. A future study could analyze the perceptions of the digital generation compared to the perceptions of the X generation.

Regarding the limits encountered through designing the research, these were contextually, technologically, subjectively, and experience based.

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Chapter 6: Ph.D. CANDIDATES' PERSPECTIVES ON NOWADAYS COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Social Central Bankers. An Analysis of Central Bank Communication on Social Media during the COVID-19 pandemic

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This study examines how central banks communicate on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether they are using these technologies to create a bidirectional communication, or to increase their transparency by reaching a wider audience. The research method used for this purpose is content analysis, by investigating the information provided on the Twitter pages of two major central banks from the Anglo-Saxon economies: the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England. To be more specific, the current study will analyze the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the relationship between central banks and the public, following how they interact with the Twitter's audience. At the same time, the paper aims to identify what type of content the monetary authorities prefer, during this period, in order to communicate their message in a more accessible and efficient way. The results are expected to show a tendency of central banks to use Twitter for the main purpose of disseminating information about their efforts to ensure the macroeconomic and financial stability, rather than for creating an open dialogue with the public.

Introduction

In the last decade, the rise of social media has challenged and eventually changed institutional communication strategies, by offering customers a key role in the creation and distribution of online content. It is in this context that central banks, too, have become more interested in finding new ways to explain what they do and to justify their measures. In addition, the need of a more efficient central bank communication has increased since the global financial crisis, which generated a demand for information on the adverse financial developments and for guidance to avoid those (Gertler & Horvath, 2018, 336). Furthermore, the adoption of inflation targeting requires a communication strategy that focuses on explaining what underlies their monetary policy decisions to a large audience.

Communication is also a powerful tool to sustain the rising independence of central banks, which have "to pay closer attention" to communication with the public than they used to do (De Haan, Eijffinger & Rybiński, 2007, 1). Press releases, reports, minutes of the monetary policy meetings, which central banks publish on their websites have a role in proving how transparent they are, and to provide significant information regarding the economic development of society. The main topics covered in their communication strategy are generally referring to direct inflation targeting, financial stability, foreign direct investment, external debt, international reserves or the need to be independent. Furthermore, central bankers try to manage people's expectations by presenting to them studies, projections, forecasts and statistics that announce future economic measures or conditions.

Nowadays, central banks tend to provide this detailed and improved information about their activities by using social network sites (SNSs). Social media is the newest and the most challenging form of communication supported by information technology and it "has arguably become the most pervasive" (McCaughey et al., 2014, 575). The social network that most central banks prefer is

Twitter, due to its features that respond to their specific needs like the access to a large audience, the instant updates and feedback, the purpose to inform and spread the news, the popularity with opinion leaders, journalists and economists. Nevertheless, the downside of using Twitter as the main social media account is its lower number of users compared to Facebook, YouTube or Instagram (the last being the ultimate trend in sharing pictures and videos).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, a global health crisis with serious effects on every sector of citizens' lives, central banks have been involved from the beginning in the economic recovery after the worldwide impositions of lockdown measures. One of the most common central banks' measures was to reduce short-term interest rates: for example, both the Fed and the Bank of England lowered rates toward zero (from 1.5 in the United States and 0.75 in the United Kingdom) as soon as the COVID-19 disease began spreading worldwide in March 2020 (Haas, Neely & Emmons, 2020, 363). They also instituted initiatives to support access to credit for SMEs and households and to ensure the financial stability, even when economic activity has been interrupted for certain sectors. Under these conditions, their activity on social networks was intensified to explain the relevance of the measures taken in response to COVID-19 pandemic, as well as their impact on the economy.

Central bank communications became a "policy tool" (Yang, Correa, & Londono, 2020), a commitment to provide information to all citizens about the injection of liquidity, about the rates they can postpone if their incomes are affected by the pandemic or about other actions central banks intend to take to protect their economy and to maintain price stability.

Therefore, based on the previous literature review, the research questions are the following:

RQ1: Do central banks use social media for engaging their public in a dialogic communication or only for delivering information about their decisions or measures?

RQ2: Which type of content do central banks prefer to share on social media?

Methodology

The objective of this study is to analyze central banks' use of social media as a means of presenting their activities or creating an online community around them. In order to define how central banks communicate on social media, and whether they are using these technologies to create a bidirectional communication, or to increase their transparency by reaching a wider audience, a content analysis of Twitter posts from the Bank of England and the Federal Reserve will be conducted. Considering that the first research question refers at the relationship between public and organizations, the study will involve a coding scheme, which was developed based on Kent and Taylor's (1998, 326-331) dialogic principles and was adapted for Twitter, 12 years later, by Rybalko and Seltzer (2010, 337-338). The first principle is named "the dialogic loop" and evaluates each central bank's responsiveness to users' comments or mentions. The second principle refers at "usefulness of information" and analyzes dialogic features like the presence of a brief description of central banks' activity or information regarding who communicate in behalf of the company. The next principles mention the generation of return visits and the conservation of visitors. Specifically, firstly, it was investigated whether the central banks encouraged the public to return to their social media feed (by using some features as links to pages on company's website where the visitors can find more information), and, secondly, if they were posting regularly.

To address the RQ2, there will be coded posts/tweets' types of content as articles (text-only posts), videos, pictures or events. Posts under the category of events talked about online press conferences/briefings, book launches or other cultural/academic events (Shen & Bissell, 2013, 639).

Results

The results are expected to show a tendency of central banks to use Twitter for the main purpose of disseminating information about their efforts to ensure the macroeconomic and financial stability, considering the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, rather than for encouraging the citizens to participate in debates and to build a community together. At the same time, given that Twitter is an online news channel, the type of content that central banks prefer on this social

network should also aim at an informative purpose, by promoting mainly articles (short texts), and less visual materials.

Conclusion

The relevance of this paper in the academic literature is given by the particularity of central bank communication, which is characterized by certain reluctance from these institutions to explain in a too simplistic way abstract economic phenomena, with a high potential for misinterpretation, when taken out of context. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought a high level of uncertainty to society as a whole, which central banks need to address in order to mitigate the possibility of reducing the effectiveness of monetary policy strategy. In this context, social networks could provide monetary authorities with the framework to address a wider audience to better anchor the inflationary expectations of all citizens, in addition to entrepreneurs or financial markets.

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Music Perception under Visual Influence: A Brand Identity Experiment

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Introduction

For today's artists to succeed in establishing themselves in the highly competitive music market, they must focus on both music and communication through marketing and branding (Franklin, 2011; Achacoso, 2014; Allen, 2018). In the top of the music industry characterized by success in the music charts, it is obvious that artists have created images and stories, and the public likes the complete packages that they present, containing both the music itself and elements related to marketing, visual identity and interaction with the public, in classic or online media outlets (Franklin, 2011; Meler, 2013; Ocádiz León, 2014; Lieb, 2018).

Visual materials are a good example of tangible elements that convey to the public what the artist proposes through the brand image, through things such as promotional posters, photographs, web pages and even logos especially in the case of bands (Dann & Jensen, 2007; Chertkow & Feehan, 2012; Tilly, 2013; Rowles, 2018).

Although we can say that branding and implicitly the visual elements affect the success of an artist, a curiosity that is only scarcely addressed in the literature is whether these elements related to branding can affect how the music itself is perceived, and not just the artist as a whole.

There are studies that show that the visual can influence musical perception (Iwamiya, 1994; Geringer, Cassidy & Byo, 1997; Gillespie, 1997; Finnäs, 2001; Juchniewicz, 2008; Thompson, Graham & Russo, 2005; Platz & Kopiez, 2012), but clear directions and implications are not emphasized, or they do not analyze the phenomenon in a practical context, applicable in the contemporary industry. Therefore, we seek to find out if there is such an influence on musical perception, in the context of a practical framework focused on music and a commercial identity that is found in everyday life.

Methodology

To research this potential influence, the most relevant method is the experiment, performed in this case with a control group and an experimental one in order to observe the differences that come with the application of a stimulus or treatment (Chelcea, 2001).

One of the most relevant variables to be analyzed are the attitude, in this case represented by the attitude towards the song and also towards the specific elements of it, in relation to intentional behavior, represented by wanting to relisten to the music track and being willing to recommend it to other people. To analyze the relationship between these variables once we introduce visual elements in the experimental group, the following hypothesis was generated:

H1. The presence of brand-like visual elements surrounding an artist leads to a higher correlation between attitude and intentional behavior, compared to when visual elements are not present.

The sample of the experiment consists of 112 respondents between 19 and 35 years old who were placed into a control group and an experimental one and were asked to evaluate a song taken from a platform of songs that are not wide known. The control group received a song evaluation questionnaire, and the experimental group, in addition to the questionnaire, was presented with the brand identity of a fictional artist, represented by several visual elements such as music artwork, banner, web page and a logo.

Results

The main hypothesis was partially validated. The data obtained show that when visual elements are present, the correlation between attitude and intentional behavior is stronger, but only in terms of the general song likability and what the potential popularity is, and not in regards to more specific song elements. The correlation increased from approximately $r = .700$ to $r = .800$ in the presence of visual elements.

In addition to the data obtained in relation to the hypothesis, other information that may be useful to the practical industry was obtained. For example, there is a strong correlation between the listener's willingness to listen to the song again and the willingness to recommend it to other people. In addition, correlations were found between elements strictly related to the structure of a song, an example being the fact that the data suggest that people who appreciate the melodious traits of a song, also appreciate its rhythmicity.

Conclusion

In relation to the hypothesis tested, the data reveal that there is indeed an influence in terms of the correlation between intentional behavior and some of the elements related to attitude, once we have introduced visual elements. Since recommending a song to others and wanting to listen to it are vital to the success of a song, the results can indeed be useful to the music industry.

One of the things that industry professionals can therefore focus on is shaping a brand identity that includes consistent visuals, which can lead directly to a larger audience, in addition to the long-term benefits that branding offers. In addition, they may note that visual elements may affect musical perception in terms of the perceived level of originality; a variable that these data suggest may be influenced by the presence of visual elements.

On the research side, the results raise new questions and study areas. Thus, we can further analyze even more specific elements related to music but also to visual elements, through things such as the color tone of visual materials, the length of a song or how branding can influence how the vocal quality of the singer is perceived.

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The Art of Storytelling.

The Role of the Communication Channel in Outlining and Storing the Message

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Whenever we talk about the success of an orally, we also consider a set of factors that make the storyteller a key element of the achievement of that story. The language, the charisma, the experience, the attitude, the knowledge of the narrator can make the story more impactful on the behavior of others. Since source credibility (expertise and likability) is essential to persuasion, the speaker matters. Thus, the communication channel can also be an important element that can change a story successful impact on the narrator herself/himself and on the listeners. The study aims to theoretically investigate how communication channels have a role in shaping, understanding and memorizing the message by the target recipients. The novelty of the present investigation is that of systematically assess the theories and the empirical evidence that link the communication channel and the storytelling competences. Academically, it completes the existing literature, especially in the Romanian context, it develops the advertising industry in particular and the communication in general, and the specialists can take results from the paper.

Introduction

The theme of this paper is the role of communication channels when we send a message through a story, a role in shaping, understanding and memorizing the message by the target recipients. The research discusses a topic with a wide openness in all areas of today's society, a topic for now and for the future, as it deals with features and possible changes in perception, reaction and attitude of recipients to messages directed at them through a story.

Consumers tend to become skeptical and distance themselves when they are greeted by advertisements everywhere: in stores and on the street, and on television and on the Internet (Gottschall, 2012). But, unlike conventional advertising, the story is able to give birth to positive feelings and less negative associations in people's minds; it attracts consumers and determines positive attitudes in human behavior (Escalas, 2004). Conventional information sources have a lower content of information and emotions than stories (Hsiao et al., 2013) that stimulate the emotions of those who delve into their reading (Gottschall, 2012). The more the emotion that a story transmits to the listeners is felt and appreciated by them, the more strength and continuity the story has. This emotion is given by the story through its heroes, myths and extraordinary phenomena (Youssef et al., 2018).

Most often, consumers make critical analyzes of the products or services on the market. But when a product is promoted through a story, it tends to be analyzed less critically by consumers. In this way, stories become "one of the most powerful approaches to marketing communication." In addition, a less critical positioning of consumers towards a product is a great advantage for any brand (Rose, 2011). Listeners make judgments based on the state of the story. "Consumer attitudes, concerns, hopes and values are significantly influenced by stories, because stories attract consumer interest" (Youssef et al., 2018).

In order to have a positive impact on people's behavior, the story must be authentic. Only in this way can it play a decisive role. A questionable story or one that has a message taken over tends to generate skepticism among consumers, and people do not like to be or feel manipulated (Firat, Venkatesh, 1995). The aesthetics of the way the stories are presented also has a role in this regard. The photos, the videos, all enrich the story and attract attention. In addition, stories stimulate

emotional memory (Hsiao et al., 2013). From a psychological point of view, consumers who interact with a product or service that was presented to them in the form of a story or with the help of a story are more likely to remember details about that product, service. In other words, the story helps people better memorize the information they receive in different ways. Memorization can be done not only factually, but also visually or emotionally. (Mossberg et al, 2010).

Original, loaded more or less with novelty, full of special emotions and experiences, real or not, having in their content an exhortation, an idea or a teaching, the stories always attract the attention of the listeners, "make the experience more real, increase the understanding concepts and improve knowledge retention" (Kendall, Kendall, 2017).

The receiver cannot retain all the data of a story. The same people listening to the same story do not remember the same thing completely or do not touch the same detail. What the receiver learns from a story comes under the influence of the receiver's own experiences, thoughts, principles, and judgments. These are the elements according to which he retains certain things in a story (Livo, Reitz, 1986). Starting from the fact that people are different in their faith, values, feelings, education, dreams, it is natural that their way of relating to a story is different. Each person passes the story through their own filters of thought and imagination, thus offering each story a different, personalized interpretation.

Methodology

When it comes to the story, answering a set of questions can help us have an overview on it: When? - from the beginning of the world. Where? - all over the world. What? - the art of telling a story; a vehicle to convey ideas and information, values and principles. Why? - to inform; to create emotions; to draw attention to something, to encourage someone; it can determined people to take attitude; Use? - it is essential for human interactions.

Taking all this into account, the final paper will consist of two parts. The first part of the paper is structured in several chapters, will contain theoretical notions and, among the topics will be found: defining the concept of story, the role of stories in sending messages, elements that make the story attractive, credibility and charisma of the narrator, outlining and message storage, communicator - broadcast channel - message relationship.

The second part of the paper will be a practical part. As a methodology, one of the methods that will be used will be a set of interviews with university professors, specialists in the linguistic environment and in the marketing space, in order to add value to the whole approach.

Questions from which the research starts:

RQ1: To what extent and in what way does the channel through which a story / message is transmitted influence the way that message is perceived?

RQ1.1: To what extent does the channel influence the level of attractiveness of the story?

RQ1.2: To what extent does the channel influence the understanding of the story?

RQ1.3: To what extent does the channel influence the memory of the message (memorability)?

RQ1.4: To what extent does the channel reflect the human dimension of the message?

RQ1.5: To what extent does the channel influence the credibility of the message?

RQ2: To what extent the way a story is perceived is influenced by the way the communicator is perceived?

RQ3: How can the channel through which a message is transmitted influence the way the communicator is perceived?

Research hypotheses:

H1. The more complex the transmission channel of the story (audio, video - image and voice), the more attractive the message is perceived (H1a), intelligible (H1b), more memorable (H1c), more human (H1d), more credible (H1e).

H2. The more charismatic the communicator is perceived, the more the message will be perceived as more attractive (H2a), intelligible (H2b), more memorable (H2c), more human (H2d), more credible (H2e).

H3. The more complex the transmission channel of the story (audio-video), the more charismatic the communicator will be perceived as.

Being a work-in-progress paper, the following steps will be the completion of the theoretical part with literature on credibility in advertising / communication and credibility of the message / story, attractiveness of a story, memorability in advertising / communication, human dimension of a message, communicator and the importance of charisma. Moreover, data will be gathered through an experimental design.

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Young Adults from Romania and Personal Branding's Importance in the Online Area

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Introduction

The relevance of this paper work consists in the detailed research of the way that young adults from Romania are focusing their attention to themselves from the point of view of personal branding, and the way they manifest this aspect in the online area. Social media represent now, more than ever, the tool by every person can present and represent them as part of a society, create new connections, provide and absorb information.

By this paper work, we want to analyze the importance that young adults from Romania attach to their self-presentation and personal brand, and the level of awareness of the traces that young adults leave in the online sphere and whether they consider the fact that the way they present themselves in this sphere can become a notable mark of their journey as members of a society.

Theoretical framework

Nowadays, brands are present in every aspect of our societies, from products, cities, to universities. Hence, developing a personal brand has become an increasingly discussed topic both in academia and business environments. However, personal branding was a common phenomenon for decades for entertainers, politicians, general managers or businesses, but currently, it has spread, and many other people from different environments or positions in the company are now branding themselves (Baltezarevic & Milovanovic, 2014). Since the mass proliferation of the Internet, researchers and marketers have been examining how to utilize the medium strategically to build a strong brand. Whether we discuss commercial or personal brands, one aspect is certain: we live in an era of unparalleled transparency. The online information provides a digital footprint that implicitly brands individuals (Labrecque et al., 2011)

Personal branding has evolved from branding, and it follows the same main principles. Therefore, examining the well-established academic literature on brands and branding offers us a starting point to understanding the concepts and principles for personal branding. Taking into consideration all the discussions on brands, specialists offer a multitude of perspectives (VITELAR, 2019). The scope of personal branding has grown from a simple business tactic in psychological recognition of the impact that the business world has upon the ideas and the consciousness individual about himself/herself (Baltezarevic & Milovanovic, 2014). Personal branding is the process whereby people and their careers are marked as brands and it differs from reputation management and impression management with its purpose. It is directly intended to create an asset and brand equity that pertains to a particular person or individual. Usually branding efforts require extensive financial support for promotion to create brand awareness and afterwards brand loyalty. Social media, with its ideological and technological structure, gives the opportunity to the people to promote themselves as brands in a relatively cheap and efficient manner (Karaduman, 2013). Nowadays social media is the best and easiest way to grow a personal identity, to establish a reputation and become visible in a specific industry or niche. It is the perfect place for the personal brand to be actualized, because almost everybody is now online and there is where they are going to look for someone if they intend to find out about his person and activity (Petrucă, 2015).

Generation Z is coming of age as the first of Gen Z talent joins the workforce. The existing literature describes generation Z as a cohort of individuals born in 1995 up to 2009, between the

ages of 10-24 years old (VITELAR, 2019) They use social media and instant internet connectivity for accessing resources. “Social media has many potential positive influences on young people’s lives, such as increasing social connections, helping with homework and enabling teenagers to develop their identities and share creative projects.” (Ipsos MORI, 2020). A high level of self-presentation and self-disclosure, as well as a medium level of social presence and media richness, can characterize social network sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Users connect and share personal information on such social media sites, including photos, video, audio files, and blog. In this sense, users can create an image that is consistent with one’s personal brand identity by consciously revealing personal information such as thoughts, feelings, likes (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

Research questions

1. In wich way young adults from Romania relate to the idea of a personal brand?
2. In wich way young adults from Romania expose themselves in the online environment, starting from the idea of a personal brand?
3. In wich way the young adults from Romania are identifying themselves with the image they have formed in the online environment?
4. How does the image of the personal brand influence the individual as a member of a society?

Hypothesis development

1. The young adults from Romania take into consideration the aspect of personal branding in the onlie area.
2. The young adults from Romania are creating a certain image of themselves in the online environment, usually starting from their personality in real life, in order to create their personal brand.
3. The young adults from Romania have creating their image in the online area starting from their personality, but they consider the pressure of the actual trend to expose their authenticity and their qualities.
4. The person feels the pressure of demonstrate his authenticity and values presented in the online environment, in the non-virtual space too.

Research methodology

This study employed a qualitative method, more exactly semi-structured interviews with young adults aged between 18 and 24, from different areas of Romania, to determine if and how they are aware of the importance of shaping a personal brand, and especially if they take this concept into account when they are making choices about what they will share in the online environment.

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Influencer Marketing. A Cross Platform Perspective

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Introduction

The paper presents a topic of current interest, with practical implication both for research in the field of communication sciences and for the industry. It is about influencer marketing, about the broad study of the concept, with connotation that involve social media and cross platform online communication. Platforms that aim to promote interpersonal contact between individuals, as well as the social connection between them, are a virtual space where content creators interact with their followers. This particular subject is not very studied and there are no concrete studies that include the whole concept of social media influencer marketing from a cross platform perspective with the Instagram, TikTok and YouTube as main channels. This literature review aims to gather all the information and research towards this niche to create a study base for future research

Social media platforms are Internet-based interpersonal communication channels that facilitate the interaction between individuals, using especially the content generated by creators (Carr & Hayes, 2015). Social media influencers, as named by Campbell and Grimm (2019), as content creators who post advertising content on online social networks in exchange for a material advantage, have been blogging since 2005. Social media influencers have continued and diversified their online activity in step with the development of social media, and the following platforms used were Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube (Borchers, 2019). Blogs, Instagram and YouTube are the favorite communication channels for social media influencers, respectively for influencer marketing (Balaban & Mustache, 2019). Instagram and YouTube (recently joined by TikTok) are among the most important influencer marketing platforms, where users have discovered new brands and products through influencers social media channels, through recommendations received from these digital stars (Nouri, 2018).

Regarding social media platforms, most studies on the activity and effects of social media of influencers have focused on Instagram and YouTube platforms (Hudders et al., 2020). Therefore, the main social media platforms used by influencers will be addressed in the paper which are Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.

Methodology

Literature review as a research method is relevant, because nowadays it makes difficult to keep up with all the research that is within an area of study. The production of knowledge and research papers is in a continuous uptrend, as well as the interdisciplinarity between the subject of research and all domains, which every one of them has a different and in some cases unique perspective. This model of literature review is an integrative one because is not systematic.

Results

The use of social media platforms is constantly growing, with 2020 registering 4.14 billion active social media users globally, of which 4.04 billion users via smartphones (Statista, 2021a). The substantial increase in the number of users has stimulated the development of content on social media platforms and at the same time its diversification. Therefore, the number of users, creators, followers, created content is constantly increasing, and thus the competitiveness on social media platforms is developed, where content creators aim to stand out. There are many ways in which

brands can use social media platforms to interact with the target audience, the most important being brand pages and sponsored or paid posts made by social media influencers (Evans et al., 2017).

The format of the content on the platforms plays a significant role in the compatibility of the social media platform with the active influencer here. Certainly, we can talk about a degree of adaptability that social media influencers have that create content for various platforms. However, influencers, like users, have preferred platforms. The success of Instagram and YouTube, among social media influencers and influencer marketing, to the detriment of Facebook or Twitter, is conclusive in this regard. Facebook is a platform for connections with friends, family, groups; Twitter is used as a news platform and does not enjoy as much success among the entire population, except the United States. We can talk about the global success of Twitter in the particular situation of some professions, such as journalists or researchers, as well as members of academia. YouTube and Instagram, on the other hand, are intended for entertainment, but are fundamentally different through the communication tools they provide. Thus, it is easier to become an influencer on these platforms, because users will follow individuals for their entertainment value, even if they have never met them in real life or in the media (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Social media influencers are trusted people for their community and have followers who follow them on various platforms. Most social media influencers use multiple social media platforms, generating cross-platform content. There are influencers who have decided to use only a social media platform as the main channel. Other content creators use two, three or more platforms. Content can be specially created for a platform or it can just be disseminated, such as distribution a video on YouTube on Instagram, or a photo on Instagram on Facebook, are common practices.

Advertising industry uses influencers to promote the brand, products or services on various social media platforms. From an advertising point of view, the social media profile of influencers is quantified in terms of traffic generated, impact, perceived expertise and, last but not least, in terms of authenticity (Hudders et al., 2020). The diversity of platforms requires, as shown above, the diversification of content for each platform. Thus, originality and creativity are essential for creating an appropriate content for each platform, based on its specificity and characteristics. Here we must not omit the characteristics of the target audience present on these platforms. Therefore, when advertisers choose a social media influencer for a particular campaign, as its target audience is largely the target audience of brands, it is necessary for them to look carefully at the decision to promote content on a particular platform, because and here differences may occur in the segmentation of the target audience.

The diversity of marketing formats for influencers, which has appeared in recent years on various social media platforms, is notable for sponsoring content on blogs, sponsored tweets, sponsored stories and posts on Instagram, along with giveaways, as well as video sponsorships on YouTube, TikTok etc.

The three platforms, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok, give the chance to any user to become someone known, to become a digital celebrity, a social media influencer. The competitiveness and continuous growth and development of user-generated content promoted by Instagram and YouTube services must be seen in the economic context of attention (Nouri, 2018). There is fierce competition for the attention of the followers, because their attention translates into the audience, and platform-specific data in terms of audience give social media advertising value to influencers.

To get results and interaction, you need authentic, unique content with personality. However, social media platforms work on the basis of sustained artificial intelligence algorithms, which decide individually for each user what type of content they will see on the feed (for example, in the Instagram application). Regardless of the platform, creative and original content is important, but it cannot decide the success of the campaign or post. So, what is appreciated by the followers of a platform may be less appreciated by followers of another platform. More platforms mean more possibilities for brands that should not be neglected. Instagram uses beautiful images and stories from everyday life, in which influencers integrate the promoted product or service. Longer texts, in which documented opinions about products and services are presented, find a suitable place on

blogs. YouTube is the right virtual space for longer videos and technically high-quality audio-visual content. TikTok is the ideal place for short and funny videos.

Conclusion

In conclusion the present literature review is a good start point in exploring the area of social media influencer from a cross platform perspective. The paper is analyzing most of the papers in this particular subject and opens some future research questions that can be further analyze and study.

Each platform has its own functionality that influences the different types of content. Successful use of platforms for advertising purposes depends on understanding the culture of the follower and the specifics of the platform, which are recommended to be reflected in the published content. Differentiating content according to the type of media used is not new; for example, a TV commercial for the same product differs from OOH (out of house advertising) advertising through a mesh (Balaban, 2009). Each social media platform has its own particularities, which can be used in favor of fulfilling the objectives of different marketing influencer campaigns.

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The Role of Authenticity for Brands and Social Media Influencers

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Authenticity is an important feature of social media influencers. This is the central idea of this paper and the strategies to remain authentic of influencers during their professionalization as communicators are discussed. In current times influencers helped in forming a new way through which people can interact with information and cultural products. Influencers represent, for users, a filter that helps them sort out information. The way they promote their personal brand shows the type of content they offer. The rise of social networks offered influencers the chance to perfectly combine content and shopping because, in what researchers call a „post-advertisements world”, consumers often avoid direct ads (Serazio, 2020).

The relevant published literature focused, in the past couple of years, on the role of authenticity regarding the success of online activities of celebrities, professional content creators or, in other words, social media influencers (Balaban & Mustăța, 2019; Audrezet et al., 2020). The authenticity of social media influencers is still talked upon as a general idea. Content creators on social media are human beings perceived by followers as celebrities, experts, or even simple consumers that test new products and services and share their opinions on social media networks (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). Due to the constant struggle to differentiate themselves from the competition, to have a defining attribute (Hudders et al., 2020), every social media influencer is in fact a brand. In other words, being a person that continuously communicates and promotes brands online and a brand in and on itself simultaneously is a challenge, as we will demonstrate in this paper. All this being said, we know far too little about authenticity, the most important element needed for the person that decided to make a living as an influencer. (Lehman et al., 2018).

Authenticity has always been an important characteristic for people, be they influencers, marketing specialists or members of the public. The waves of disinformation and the supposed influence it has over the consumers led to the need of authenticity (Lee, 2020). The perception over authenticity (or lack thereof) affects the way people relate to certain aspects of everyday life and the way they behave regarding certain fields of activity. Nevertheless, in this context, the definition of the concept of „authenticity” is ambiguous (Newman, 2019).

The published literature mentions that authenticity is, in fact, a figment of the imagination from a cultural point of view, which in turn evolved into the modern world (Handler, 1986), a „implicitly polemic concept” (Trilling, 1972, 94) or a word of dimension (Dutton, 2009). In a general sense, authenticity is a concept meant to capture truth and veridicality (Newman, 2019), meaning if a product or experience is truthful and real and respects a feature or dimension (Newman and Dahr, 2014). Also, it is considered that authenticity, as a general term, in spite of the different definitions of interpretations, is linked to veridicality, reality or truthfulness (Beverland et al., 2010).

When it comes to authenticity there must be considered 2 main dimensions of the matter: a continuity regarding the way a person expresses themselves and the values and beliefs they have, this way maintaining a balance between what is seen on the outside and what there is inside (Lehman et al., 2018).

Consumers started to feel an increased need of truthfulness, honesty and trust from their relationship with brands (Burnett and Hutton, 2007).

Because the majority of people share and search for information online, brands had to reorient themselves for their advertisements so their messages could reach the consumers. This is

how one of the most intensely utilized methods of promotion appeared, promotion with the help of social media influencers, or what the published literature calls: influencer marketing. This way information is distributed by these online celebrities that hold the qualities of a “lider de opinie” through word of mouth communication, because consumers tend to have more positive reactions towards a message from a friend rather than the sponsored ads of a company (Woods, 2016).

Because of this the interest in influencer marketing is growing and companies are investing greatly in this direction (Balaban & Mustăţea, 2019).

The way social media influencers interact with the public, a way in which their integrity and competence are perceived by their viewers, will help them build a lasting relationship with their followers. Authentic people have the purpose of delivering on their promises, considering the fact that keeping these promises will show certain traits of their personality, resulting in a higher degree of trust from their followers (Schallehn et al., 2014).

In this case, authenticity became a way through which people can differentiate themselves not only from one another, but from other forms of media as well. A content creator that showcases authenticity is the one that tells the truth about him and is honest about their relationship with the public, maintaining his own personal style despite the trends, sponsots or free items they receive (Marwick, 2013).

In Lee’s opinion (2020), authentic communication is based on three channels: at the level of the source (if the content creators are who they say they are), message (when what they say is true) and the authenticity of the interaction (if the way the influencer interacts with his followers is veridical). In the authenticity model proposed by Lee (2020), the source refers to the person that is presumed to have produced the message. Interpersonal communication en masse through the means of the Internet produced a new type of communication: many-to-many, with the help of comment sections, news sites and the reviews on e-commerce platforms. These messages represent partly the public opinion because it is considered that they come from real people, from real customers. If the opinions were written by paid people or robots, they would not be credible for the public. The authenticity of the message reffers to the degree of sincerity of the message that represets an object, an event, a person or a situation (Lee, 2020). In this case, the perceived authenticity and the credibility of the message overlap (Appelman şi Sundar, 2016).

Interaction authenticity refers to how involved people feel in an interaction that transforms a detached audience (as in the case of mass communication) into a participant in the communication process and the technology helps people to virtualy participate in an interaction which does not really take place and of which they are not part, thus realizing an imaginary interaction.

The three types of authenticity are interconnected. First, the authenticity of the interaction intensifies both the authenticity of the message and that of the source. Secondly, the source of the message and its authenticity are related, but not in a linear way. This is because, for example, a review of a product will only be considered authentic if those who read it truly believe that it was written by a real person. That is, if the source does not appear to be authentic, then the message will not be perceived as authentic either. However, although the authenticity depends on these three factors and there is a connection between them, it is not mandatory that they be used all at the same time and, even if they are used at the same time, they are not used to the same extent (Lee, 2020).

However, social media influencers, most of the time, create their authenticity presenting themselves as they are in real life, on social networks (Marwick, 2013). This is a proof of the authenticity of the source and the authenticity of the message.

The issue of the social media authenticity of influencers was approached mainly from the perspective of its relevance for consumers. It can be continued / developed in future studies to understand in detail how the authenticity and its role define influence. It is interesting to see how social media influencers manage to keep the balance between advertising and non-advertising content and how they make the decision to promote or, more importantly, not to promote a particular brand or product.

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Older Adults and COVID-19: Vaccination, News Sharing and Health Information Seeking Behavior

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Introduction

An outbreak of a novel coronavirus disease called COVID-19 was reported in January 2020 in Wuhan, China, and it spread rapidly in the city and across China, and started to extend in other countries (Sun et al., 2020). The virus that responsible for COVID-19 was called SARS-CoV-2 and proved to be extremely contagious and dangerous especially for vulnerable groups: people with health conditions and older people (Kwok et al., 2020). This coronavirus pandemic offers the perfect opportunity for spreading misinformation in the online environment. On this note, the World Health Organization's director claimed that alongside the threat of the coronavirus pandemic there is another important threat the world is facing, namely an infodemic (Nielsen et al. 2020). Fabricated information is "spreading faster than the virus" (2020). All across the globe, the topic of COVID-19 is prone to misinformation and disinformation, since false or misleading articles are being published on this topic. These false articles can have negative consequences for the people's lives. Disinformation campaigns regarding coronavirus tackle topics like the source of the virus or the authorities' efforts towards controlling the pandemic (2020).

In this context, the main objectives of the present research are to assess health information seeking behaviour during health crisis across older people from Romania (50-64 years old and over 65 years old), to identify older people's usage of WhatsApp and Facebook during the coronavirus pandemic, to examine their attitudes towards the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as their perceived ability to distinguish between a trustful COVID-19-related information and a fake one. The theoretical background of this paper is based on the Social-Mediated Crisis Communication Model (Austin et al., 2012) and Longo's expanded model of health information seeking behavior (Longo et al., 2010, in Lalazaryan & Zare-Farashbandi, 2014).

The research questions this paper focuses on are the following:

- How do older people from Romania (50-64 years old and over 65 years old) seek and find health information online during health crisis?
- How older people from Romania (50-64 years old and over 65 years old) used WhatsApp and Facebook in order to stay informed about the coronavirus pandemic during April-May 2020 and October 2020-January 2021?
- What is the attitude of older people from Romania (50-64 years old and over 65 years old) regarding the COVID-19 vaccine?
- What is the perception of older people from Romania (50-64 years old and over 65 years old) regarding their ability to distinguish between trustful COVID-19-related information and a fake one? What strategies do they use in order to identify fake and misleading information?

Methodology

In order to answer to these research questions, some semi-structured interviews were applied, N=22 male and female participants from Romania (50-64 years old and over 65 years old), randomly selected from an online Facebook group. The 2 age groups analysed were 50-64 years old and over 65 years old, since the age groups were determined based on Romania's population structure by age groups established by the National Institute of Statistics from Romania. 17 people

had ages between 50-64 years old and 5 individuals were over 65 years old. After obtaining the participants' informed consent to participate in the research, interviews were conducted by telephone in February 2021. Each interview lasted between 20 and 35 minutes.

Results

All respondents responded to all the interview's questions. The main results of the paper emphasize the fact that, when it comes to seeking and finding health information online during health crisis, most of the respondents claimed that they search health information from reliable sources, such as the websites of various health institutions from Romania, or from the Ministry of Health. However, some of them (13 out of 22 respondents) claimed that they read and implement health tips from Facebook groups or various unreliable sources, such as blogs or unreliable websites. When they have a health problem, they appeal to "dr. Google", where they can access a variety of health information from various sources. In this regard, one particular discussion with A. (female, 53 years old) is worth being mentioned here in detail, because she said that she doesn't trust the information she reads on reliable sources, such as health institutions from Romania or the World Health Organization, because she knows that the pills do only harm to the human organism. So, when she has a health problem, she searches Google for Ayurvedic or natural treatments.

Most of the respondents have a positive attitude towards the COVID-19 vaccine and the majority (18 out of 22) is willing to get vaccinated, claiming that "if we all vaccinate, we will return to the life before" (V., female, 68 years old), "this vaccine is the only way in which we can eradicate this virus, the only way in which we will be able to spend time with our families again" (L., male, 54 years old), or that "I cannot wait to get vaccinated, so that I can meet my grandsons" (M, female 52 years old).

The majority of the sample (19 out of 22) claimed that they are capable of distinguishing between a trustful COVID-19-related information and a fake one, stating that they know several strategies for identifying fake news. They look at the source of the article and at the information contained in an article.

During the coronavirus pandemic, all respondents stated that they used WhatsApp and Facebook during April-May 2020 and October 2020-January 2021, but mostly for talking with their families and for staying informed about the development of the pandemic (15 out of 22). Also, 12 out of 22 participants claimed that there are a lot of fake news distributed on Facebook WhatsApp especially, so they trust more the traditional media when it comes to the information about the coronavirus pandemic.

Conclusion

The results indicated that older people perceive themselves as being capable of searching and finding health information on the Internet, but, despite this, they read and implement health tips and remedies read on unreliable websites or blogs. However, most of the respondents claimed that they do not completely trust health information they receive on Facebook or WhatsApp during crisis situations, but they trust the ones that are distributed on traditional mass-media. Also, the majority of the respondents declared themselves as willing to vaccinate against COVID-19 and as being able to distinguish between trustful coronavirus-related information and a fake one. This research can have multiple implications, especially in the field of health information campaigns developed during health crises. Of course, this paper has limitations, such as the small number of participants, so future research should focus on a larger sample and different age groups.

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Gender Perspectives on Virtual Reality.

A Qualitative Analysis on Technology Acceptance Differences

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Introduction

In an enlightened society, the technology has been one of the driving factors in the advance of human civilization, due to the capability of adding visual imagery at the time of speaking, enabling one party and another to interpret reactions (Olson et al., 1995; Partala & Saari, 2015). In this context, the paper aims to create a comparison regarding the gender's perceptions on their previous Virtual Reality (VR) use experiences in general, clarifying at the same time the link between gender and the use of VR.

Virtual Reality technology provides a computer-mediated environment (Van Kerrebroeck et al., 2017a) which can be interacted with and also perceived, so the user can experience the feeling of being present (Van Kerrebroeck et al., 2017b). The virtual technology consists of a mix of three key features, the *interactivity* and the *immersion* which enable the user to take part at the action on the screen and modify the virtual world; and the *imagination* as a capacity to perceive non-existing things (Burdea, 2003). This new technology is used in various fields of studies, such as simulations and experiments in medicine, for the training of pilots, astronauts and drivers in simulated systems, in computer assisted design, for modeling and visualization in the science, for education, branding, tourism and marketing, in retail, entertainment, healthcare, meteorology, welding, for computer games and animations, etc. (Ausburn et al., 2009; Bessis & Dobre, 2014; Chiou et al., 2008; Burdea, 2003; Marasco et al., 2018; Tussyadiah et al., 2018).

Despite the fact that virtual technology has started to gain popularity among the consumers, the number of published papers on the topic is relatively small, as a considerable amount of studies have the main focus on the experience (Kruzan & Won, 2019). The present paper is a descriptive study which aims to analyze the differences in perceptions between men and women on the use of VR and to assess the emotional VR involvement of men and women.

Virtual Reality and Gender

Taking into consideration that nowadays the use of the latest technologies has been spread worldwide, there is little known about gender differences in terms of VR use (Felnhofer et al., 2012), but past researches have shown that the experiences concerning the manipulation of immersive technology can have certain effects on bias (Schulze et al., 2019), showing that men and women perceive virtual worlds in different manners (Coelho et al., 2019). The aforementioned effects have their roots in a considerable series of factors that led to differences in gender perception. These factors can be related to the previous experiences with computer technologies, or can be social and cultural factors which tend to influence the human perception; the spatial and visual usefulness; performance; environment; human navigation, etc. (Ausburn et al., 2009; Larson et al., 1999).

Past researches have showed that there is another essential aspect in mentioning the differences in gender perception linked to VR, based on the *biological phenomena*. The results offered a complex perspective on women's perception in relation to the field of view, as they receive more perceptible signals at the same time as men do, and withal, these differences seem to be associated to other factors in the use of the latest technologies, for instance enjoyment (Rangelova & Marsden, 2018). A certain influence on defining the differences between gender

linked to Virtual Reality is the *technology acceptance*, taking into consideration that males take to a greater extent the perceived usefulness in deciding regarding the use of a new technology than females, and that males tend to be more open in adopting new technologies (Dirin et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2017).

Methodology

The paper aims to analyze the differences in perception between men and women regarding the use of the virtual reality technology. The research method used is the interview which consists of 14 questions with a focus on the perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, emotional flow and behavioral intentions.

Results

The results show that men consider themselves technology-addicts, as they have a higher frequency in VR adoption than women, using it several times a week, while women consider technology as a tool in improving their work or an entertaining medium, using it one a week or less. More than this, both genders use the technology for cultural and artistic experiences with limited differences, as men consider VR as a tool in education, while women use it in creating content. At the same time, women consider VR experiences as being fun, while men consider the experiences being amazing.

Concerning the adoption of technology, on one hand, both men and women consider in terms of perceived ease of use, that VR implies natural skills and that the use is easy, women relying on tutorials. On the other hand, both genders believe that VR is a proper apparatus for society. At the same time, men stressed the idea that VR can improve the health estate, while women consider that VR can offer the possibility of a different experience.

In the emotional context, both genders emphasized the positive aspect of VR, specifically the immersive experience, which brings joy, excitement, amusement and other positive feelings. As literature pointed, women tend to experience motion sickness in VR use, which was underlined in the present study, too, while men consider that the devices should be improved and both women and men take into consideration the use of VR in future for personal or professional purpose.

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Sports Strategic Communication.

Branding and Communication Policy in Romanian Sports Marketing with a Focus on Handball

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This paper analyzes strategic communication in sports communication by examining the plethora of sports marketing definitions and the internal and external processes that lead to a model of strategic communication in sports. It represents a first step in assessing the current situation of sports marketing in order to discover effective ways of strategic sports communication. The topic is interdisciplinary and multivalent. The strong overlaps between marketing, advertising and public relations are accompanied by changing phenomena in the mass media, such as the transition to the online environment. This paper aims to be an introduction to challenge the status quo of sports communication and to dive deep into the existing approach to find new, more effective ways of strategic sports communication.

From general marketing with sports to marketing in sports

In the current general view, sports' marketing is defined as „all activities aimed at meeting the needs and desires of sports consumers through exchange processes” (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007, 11) and divided in two broad disciplines: marketing of sports products and marketing of products through sports (cf. Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007). Sports products are thereby defined by Shank (1999) as „a good, a service, or a combination of both designed to provide benefits to a sports spectator, participant, or sponsor”.

A different definition of sports marketing is also given by Walter Freyer (2003, 47) in his book *Sport-Marketing: Handbuch für marktorientiertes Management im Sport*. A clear distinction is made between the terms marketing with sports and marketing in sports, the latter being explained as „the development of marketing management concepts for organizations in the sports industry” (Freyer, 2003, 47).

Considering that the definitions of sports marketing by Mullin Hardy and Sutton (2007) and Freyer (2003) have a two-sided valence, this paper covers and explains the marketing of sports products (Mullin, Hardy & Sutton, 2007) and marketing in sports (Freyer, 2003). Accordingly, Mullin Hardy and Sutton (2007) describe sports marketing as the way in which the positive attributes associated with sports are used by companies and organizations as advertising vehicles. As a common element in the sports marketing according to the above definitions are the sports organizations (Freyer, 2004, Davis & Hilbert, 2013), which are found within sports entities such as athletes, teams, coaches, leagues (Davis & Hilbert, 2013).

Concluding, sports marketing can be defined as follows, following Freyer (2004), Mullin, Hardy & Sutton (2007) and Davis & Hilbert (2013):

Sports product marketing is the totality of value-adding activities undertaken by organizations associated with sports entities through exchange processes to increase sports institutions in the market through the application of business management methods, respectively, to meet the needs and desires of sports consumers to increase interest in the sports organization and sales [own definition based on Freyer (2004), Mullin, Hardy & Sutton (2007), Davis & Hilbert (2013)].

Internal and external processes in sports marketing: the magic triangle

In the attempt to define sports, the secondary elements apart from the entities involved must of course be included. In the above definition, only the internal process of sports marketing were considered by designating the entities directly involved. However, approaching the marketing of sports products only from this perspective may imply a limited knowledge of the term. In this regard, it is necessary to know the environment of sports marketing and define the external components as well as the inward and outward processes.

The external components of sports marketing are derived from the magic triangle of sports. In 2008, Beck introduces the magic triangle and names the three components of the triangle: sports, media, and business (Beck, 2008, 2). To this end, it explains that media, business, and sports are „functionally and financially interdependent” (Imhof, 1996, 221) and with „common target groups with whom they interact as communicators in the circle of meaning” (Könecké, 2014, 87). According to Könecké (2014), sports, media, and business are connected on the same level.

The internal processes between sports institutions, the market and sports consumers continue to be closely related to the goals of sports marketing and take place through exchange processes. Sports institutions are the origin of certain activities and methods that flow from the top down to the market and sports consumers (Beck, 2008).

As a counterpart, the internal processes are upwards: on one side we talk about the increase of sales and the increase of sports institutions by the market and on the other side we talk about the increase of interest and the fulfillment of the needs of the target group. The external environment of sports marketing includes the external processes between the market, the media and the sports consumers (Beck, 2008).

Strategic communication model in sport

The Strategic Sports Communication Model (SSCM) (Pedersen, Miloch & Laucella, 2016) encompasses all major levels, contexts, and domains such as advertising, communication technology, social media, journalism and public relations involved in the Magic Triangle (Beck, 2001).

The levels of sport communication consist of three components: personal and organizational communication in sport, media communication, and underlying sport communication services. These are presented in relation to aspects of strategic sport communication (Billings, Butterworth & Turman, 2018) and the reasons for their implementation in sport (Jinga, 2009).

The first component that is central to the communication process in sports is personal and organizational communication (Fig. 1). The subcategories we find are intrapersonal, interpersonal and group communication, and intra-organizational and inter-organizational communication.

Among the aspects of sports communication (Billings et al., 2018: 2-4), the sports community and fan culture fall under the umbrella of the first component. The reasons for the implementation of strategic communication (Jinga, 2009: 9-13) include the intensification of competition, the proliferation or lack of sports clubs, and the development of private professional sports.

The second component, directly related to the first, is media communication, including mass media and social media. A direct link to aspects of sports communication (Billings et al., 2018: 2-4) is found in sports media, politics, and nationalism. Two reasons suggested by Jinga (2009) that are related to this component are marketing and advertising by the media.

The third component consists of sports communication services such as integrated marketing, public relations, crisis communication, and research. Here we can classify crisis communication as a common element of the strategic model (Pedersen, Miloch & Laucella, 2016) and aspects of strategic communication in sport (Billings et al., 2018: 2-4). In relation to the reasons outlined by Jinga (2009), the changing dynamics and need for marketing research are included here.

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